

# Open Research Online

---

The Open University's repository of research publications and other research outputs

## Improving Professional Skills for Trainers Working with Unemployed Adult Learners in Austria

### Thesis

#### How to cite:

Kieberger, Esther (2017). Improving Professional Skills for Trainers Working with Unemployed Adult Learners in Austria. EdD thesis The Open University.

For guidance on citations see [FAQs](#).

© 2016 The Author



<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/>

Version: Submitted Version

Link(s) to article on publisher's website:  
<http://dx.doi.org/doi:10.21954/ou.ro.0000ceae>

---

Copyright and Moral Rights for the articles on this site are retained by the individual authors and/or other copyright owners. For more information on Open Research Online's data [policy](#) on reuse of materials please consult the policies page.

---

[oro.open.ac.uk](http://oro.open.ac.uk)

**Improving professional skills of trainers working with  
unemployed adult learners in Austria**

Submitted for the degree of

**Doctorate of Education (EdD)**

Esther Kieberger, (MEd (Open))

31<sup>st</sup> October 2016

The Open University,

Milton Keynes, UK



## **Dedication**

This work is dedicated to my greatest mentor, my wonderful mother Grace Nyambura Gitau, who taught me to work hard and to believe in myself, and to my late father Samuel Gitau Thitiri Thiongo who has remained an inspiring pillar in my life.

## **Acknowledgements**

It is with immense gratitude that I acknowledge the wonderful support and guidance of my supervisors, Dr Jan Moreland and Dr Janet Harvey during this research project. Thank you for showing understanding and humanity during my difficult times, and for encouraging me to complete my doctoral journey.

Many thanks go to my colleague Cristina for her advice, patience and technical support with translation and special thanks to my son George, a bilingual teacher for showing understanding and support during the difficulty periods I was sick, and for his assistance with translation.

I owe my deepest gratitude to my colleagues with whom I shared this experience with during the ‘redundant period’ that often felt like going through a dark forest. Thank you (Christine, Sonja, Lee). It was interesting to share worries and successes in this journey.

I would like to thank my family and in particular my husband James for supporting and encouraging me when I seemed to lose motivation of the unending journey during the years of my study.

## **Abstract**

Trainers in New Star Vocational College (name changed) in Austria are employees who teach unemployed learners. Usually, they have advanced qualifications in other disciplines but not related to adult education. The Austrian labour policy focuses on retraining unemployed people to enter the labour market, a key concern that is given high priority. Therefore, New Star Vocational College relies on these trainers to implement the type of courses offered. In this thesis the perspective is that the trainer has a key role to play and should be adequately prepared in terms of unemployed learners, so as to have an impact on learning outcomes and to improve teaching quality. The research study aims to assess the perception of learners, trainers and the management on how adult learning is viewed in New Star Vocational College, qualities of a good trainer, teaching quality and how improvements can be made to equip the trainers through continuing professional development.

Data was collected and analysed using Grounded Theory influenced by the interpretive paradigm, which is discussed in Chapter 3.3. I utilised semi-structured interviews, open-ended questionnaires and documents. Twenty semi-structured interviews were carried out with trainers and managers, while open-ended questionnaires were distributed to 12 adult learners, who all responded.

The study finds that trainers are essential to the success of retraining the adult learners. Furthermore, the study was able to identify detailed difficulties and

challenges of teaching long- term unemployed learners, and to understand the trainers' need to find ways to improve their professional skills necessary to teach this target learner. This study concludes that trainer professional development is important with support from managerial systems and other stakeholders. Key suggestions to facilitate improvements to support trainers, learners and institution are well defined. In future research, more data that reflects on this particular situation should be collected.

## **TABLE OF CONTENTS**

<b>Dedication</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Acknowledgements</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Abstract</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Glossary</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>CHAPTER 1</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>1. Introduction</b>	<b>13</b>
1.1 Research context	14
1.2 Rationale	16
1.3 Study	18
1.4 Trainer policy in Austria	21
<b>CHAPTER 2</b>	<b>30</b>
<b>2 LITERATURE REVIEW</b>	<b>30</b>
2.1 Introduction	30
2.2 Policy context	34
2.3 The adult learner and theories of adult learning in adult education	38
2.4 Implications for teaching and the role of trainers	45
2.5 Perceptions of quality teaching	49
2.6 Rationale for continuing professional development	54
2.7 Development of the research questions	62
<b>CHAPTER 3</b>	<b>65</b>
<b>3 METHODS AND METHODOLOGY</b>	<b>65</b>
3.1 Introduction	65
3.2 Pilot study	66
3.3 Research paradigm, approaches and design	69

3.4 Qualitative research	72
3.5 Research design	76
3.6 Role of Researcher	78
3.7 Purposive sampling	85
3.8 Methods used	91
3.9 Interviewing process	93
3.10 Ethical Considerations	102
3.11 Data analysis	108
3.12 My conceptual framework and the links to my methods and analysis	113
3.14 Analysis in process	116
3.15 Translation in process	119
3.16 Issues of validity, reliability and bias	125
3.17 Researcher Bias	126
<b>CHAPTER 4</b>	<b>138</b>
<b>4 DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION</b>	<b>138</b>
4.1 Introduction	138
4.2 Research questions 1: Adult education in New Star Vocational College	139
4.3 Research question 2: Perception of teaching quality	156
4.5 Research question 3: How can trainers be helped to enhance their professional skills to teach unemployed learners?	176
4.6 Improving professional skills through CPD	179
4.7 Activities and desired CPD Models	188
4.8 Change in the organisation and administration	194



<b>CHAPTER 5</b>	<b>206</b>
<b>5 DISCUSSION OF THE IMPLICATIONS FOR PRACTICE AND POLICY AND FUTURE RESEARCH</b>	<b>206</b>
5.1 Introductions	206
5.2 Research findings linked to the questions	208
5.3 Contributions of the study	216
5.4 Implications for practice	217
5.5 Implications for policy	225
5.6 Limitations of the study	227
5.7 Positive outcomes of the study	228
5.8 Future research	231
<b>References</b>	<b>233</b>
<b>Appendices</b>	<b>250</b>
<b>Appendix 1:</b> Informed consent form and sample letter to participants	250
<b>Appendix 2:</b> Developmental interview schedules	255
<b>Appendix 3:</b> Initial coding	261
Extract from interview 1 transcript with initial coding	261
<b>Appendix 4:</b> A few examples of initial and focused codes, extract 1	263
<b>Appendix 5:</b> Examples of selected codes	268
<b>Appendix 6:</b> Student questionnaire in original language (German)	270
<b>Appendix 7:</b> Contact summary sheet 3	277
<b>Appendix 8:</b> Memo 072 16 /4/2015 interview 14	278
<b>Appendix 9:</b> Types of labour market programmes	278
<b>Appendix 10:</b> Telephone interview and original quotations	280

## **Tables and Figures**

<b>Table 2.1</b>	Development of the research questions	62
<b>Table 3.1</b>	Characteristics of participants (trainers and managers)	86
<b>Table 3.2</b>	Learners' sample and questionnaire response rate	88
<b>Table 3.3</b>	Periods of data collection	93
<b>Table 4.1</b>	Challenges of teaching unemployed learners	144
<b>Table 4.2</b>	Other survival strategies mentioned by most trainers	154
<b>Table 4.3</b>	Learners' perception of quality teaching	161
<b>Table 4.4</b>	Learners' suggestions on improving quality	164
<b>Figure 4.5</b>	Characteristics of a good trainer	171
<b>Table 4.6</b>	Summary of necessary skills needed to teach the unemployed people	181
<b>Table 4.7</b>	Advise for beginning trainers	188
<b>Table 4.8</b>	Key areas identified that could enhance the teaching quality	189
<b>Table 4.9</b>	Suggestions for continuing professional development models	190
<b>Table 4.10</b>	Criticism of the management	194
<b>Figure 4.1</b>	Typical senior managers' duties	199
<b>Table 4.11</b>	Support expected from the management.	198
<b>Table 4.12</b>	Desired changes in the management	201
<b>Figure 5.1</b>	Strategy on how trainers can develop teaching skills	220

## **Glossary**

**CELTA** (Certificate of English Language of Teaching Adults) is a Cambridge certificate acquired to teach adult learners English as a language.

**COP** Community of Practice.

**CPD** Continuing professional development.

**Employed learner** is used to describe adults who are in employment and pay to attend courses.

**Federal structure** in adult education involves several ministries:

- Federal Ministry of Education and Women's Affairs is responsible for General adult education and schools for the employed.
- Federal Ministry of Science, Research and Economy: is in-charge of University education and on the job training.
- Federal Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Consumer Protection: is responsible for further education related to the labour market.
- Other ministries involved in further education: Federal Ministry of Health, Federal Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, Environment and Water Management, Ministry of Finance, Federal Ministry of the Interior and Austrian foreign Ministry.

**New Star Vocational College (NSVC)** is used as a pseudonym to refer to the research setting, which is organised like a school with a curriculum, different classes, teaching equipment, textbooks, timetable that includes breaks, trainers and learners.

**Project coordinator** is in-charge of the management in New Star Vocational College. Responsible for developing courses, recruiting trainers, interviewing

learners and co-ordinating class allocations, administrative duties, monitoring students' end of term report and sending them to the external partner, holding meetings with trainers, attending meetings with external partners, and overseeing the implementation of the projects' policies.

**Provider** has been used to refer to the people who win contracts from the labour agency to provide courses that are suitable for retraining unemployed people. Their role is to find appropriate facilities, trainers, learning resources, admit learners, submit reports on the learners' progress and make recommendations for future terms of reference.

**Public Employment Service (PES)** is the most influential body in the labour market programmes; it is responsible for unemployed people during periods of joblessness or job-search and also for improving their competence in the labour market by organising courses through selected providers. They have mandate to send people to attend these courses and to give penalties for not cooperating.

**The management** is a term used in this study in two ways in the German sense (Unternehmensführung) because there are so many meanings. First, it refers to personnel that run the company and the process of running the company. Secondly, it is interpreted to refer to institutional, functional processes inclusive of planning, staffing, co-ordinating, controlling, leading of the personnel and the organisation.

**Unemployed learners** is a term used in this study to refer to adults who have either been in full-time or part-time employment, people with a career break, youth, older people heading for retirement, mothers after maternity leave, migrants, people with disabilities or people undergoing rehabilitations to find work. Generally, they attend courses organised by external partners through an

identified provider. Most literature preferred to use the term ‘customer’ and saw education as a product or commodity to be sold.

**Trainer** is used to refer to adult educators who teach in adult institutions.

**Ö-Cert** (Österreichs Zertifikat- Verzeichnis der Österreichers Qualitätsanbieter) Austrian quality certificate for certified and registered providers. The list of certified organisations contains many non-governmental providers, associations and NGOs.

**Student Feedback Form** is an evaluation tool used by the management to evaluate trainers, learners fill out the forms at the end of the course. They write about what they liked and also make suggestions on what they did not like.

**VHS (Volkshochschule)** is an adult centre with a wide range of curriculum where courses for adults are held, mostly in the evenings

# **Chapter 1**

## **1. Introduction**

An interviewee who became my key informant told me:

‘Skills that I have developed over the years have changed to ‘survival strategies’ Selena (2014).

Selena saw the value of developing ‘own’ skills to manage teaching unemployed people. The experiences though unique helped me capture a picture of trainers, who had adapted, developed and perfected skills that enabled them to overcome challenges in the classroom.

In this study, I have tried to listen to my colleagues as they explain how they have managed to handle unemployed learners by drawing from their own experiences and interactions in the classroom. Essentially, I explored how they have made progress in identifying skills that can work in those non-traditional classes.

I have drawn from adult learning theories, teaching quality and continuing professional development as a conceptual framework to help me understand and simplify the rich data. The study was approached from the perspective of trainers, learners, managers and policy context because it was a relatively small research site.

## **1.1 Research context**

The research was conducted in Austria in one location, New Star Vocational College because of its unique composition, and for the fact that I worked there. It is an adult institution privately run in partnership with other stakeholders in providing coaching and consulting services to unemployed people. Although it is a private company with many branches in the country, its internal policy is influenced by the Public Employment Service (PES) on enrolment of learners, recruitment and selection of trainers. New Star Vocational College was founded 17 years ago and began with Basic English language courses and Information technology. It has experienced growth of its student population and expansion of the curriculum to include examinable courses leading to qualifications and attainment of certificates. However, NSVC employs about 80% part-time trainers and 20% full-time trainers who have diverse backgrounds and qualifications that are not necessarily professional skills in teaching adults. Although the nature and type of student is non-traditional, many trainers value their work despite the challenges. Nevertheless, their contribution to NSVC and to the country in retraining unemployed learners is significant.

### **1.1.1 Basic contextual background about the college**

NSVC has a hierarchical structure with a chief executive officer at the top; assisted by two managers, and at the bottom are the projector coordinator, trainers and support staff. The culture in NSVC is based on this hierarchical nature, which appears to promote a strict managerial type of relationship. Communication is done through E-mails so that face-to-face interactions are rare. The staff is

expected to promote the organizational mission and objectives, but they are also encouraged to see that there are less complaints from learners because the external partner could withdraw already won contracts or fail to renew projects. Matters of job satisfaction and staff development are hardly discussed. There is an untold acknowledgement and acceptance not to question the way things are done, lack of compliance is met with penalties like redundancies or being transferred to other locations. Therefore, issues of redundancies, change of trainers and substitution seem to be part of the culture.

Trainers' roles and functions are numerous, they are required to communicate to the learners planned goals and expectations of the courses, to organize and target activities that reinforce job-oriented learning tasks in ESL classes. However, these roles indicate that new technologies, new labour market expectations on building competencies of workers appear to create a gap in trainers' practice between what is perceived as good qualities of a trainer and demands of the labour market within unemployment provisions. This requires that trainers frequently update their competencies because of new training approaches.

NSVC provides very little information for staff to discover learning and professional development opportunities. However, for employment purposes, trainers are given opportunities to acquire a certificate in gender and diversity on condition that the trainers meet the cost. Distance education on human resource management is recommended through other schools and organizations but there are no fee waivers or subsidies.



Under the learning and development Policy Statement (NSVC, 2013), the institution purports to be strongly committed to an environment in which all members of staff are encouraged to pursue opportunities for professional growth. A learning environment is fundamental to staff morale and retention (Day, 1999), and to the image of the institution. It is important to point out that the responsibility lies with the trainers to seek relevant learning activities, but it is completely necessary for this to occur within a supportive organizational background. The managers do not really place particular importance on the role of project coordinator or any other manager in empowering trainers to achieve their professional goals. They do not appear to support or encourage the participation of staff members in learning activities within the framework of an effective workplace.

Section 1.2 focuses on the rationale for the study.

## **1.2 Rationale**

I am a Kenyan who has lived and worked in Austria for about 20 years. After my Masters degree study with Open University, I observed the importance of improving and equipping the trainers with the necessary professional skills to teach unemployed learners. The demand for retraining unemployed people for the labour market has grown over recent years. Since 2009, my work as an English language trainer with an educational background has led me to realise the importance of teaching English as a second language and English as an additional skill for the labour market. However, my observations and experience have driven me to question the teaching quality and effectiveness of the trainers, and to what

extent they can be helped to improve. Initial interviews revealed challenges and difficulties that trainers undergo, and also indicated that little research has focused on trainers of unemployed people and factors that could impact on learning and teaching.

The diversity of these trainers led me to study this topic because little attention had been paid to defining the processes of training or even continuing professional development. Sava and Lopou (2009:2227) argue that the majority of these trainers ‘interact with their learners in a didactical way without an explicit qualification for the activity’. Most of them do what they do based on dealing with adults on the job, working experience, other trainings and voluntary activities.

I therefore reconsidered my beliefs on trainer effectiveness and its role on unemployed learners and began to see the trainer as a learner too. As the research developed, I became interested in what the trainers thought were additional skills they needed in order to improve their quality of teaching. This led to the consideration of how adults learn, especially unemployed learners and their attitude towards learning, qualities of a good trainer, teaching quality and strategies for how trainers can learn.

This investigation is about how trainers can be assisted to develop professional teaching skills to manage the challenges and difficulties of teaching unemployed learners to improve teaching quality. The study is presented from the perspectives of trainers, unemployed learners and senior managers, and how these views may

shape the professional development and probably the professionalisation of trainers (Lassnigg, 2012), and learning experiences of unemployed learners. This thesis entails an analysis of the participants' interactions, which were considered in the light of their personal and professional background, and in connection with other contextual factors in improving practices.

The advantage of insider research is that it allows the researcher to collect first hand rich data of complex issues because of the relationships built in the workplace (Hellawell, 2006). As a result of the interactions and discussions with colleagues, the research started in a collegial atmosphere to find suitable ways of improving practice. It provided opportunities for people to work together in a new way and to talk about issues that they had not done before (Day, 1997; Wenger, 1998; Harris, 2001, 2003).

The following section gives a summary of the study.

### **1.3 The Study**

The investigation looked at how trainers can be helped to improve teaching quality for unemployed adult learners. The context is connected to the national policy of unemployment, trainer policy and adult learning policy. The thesis title is linked to a discussion related to challenges of teaching unemployed learners, and the sort of improvements that can be made with support from various stakeholders.

Specific research questions are:

1. What are the unemployed adult learners and adult trainers' perception of adult education at New Star Vocational College?
2. How do unemployed adult learners and adult trainers perceive teaching quality in New Star Vocational College?
3. How can trainers be helped to enhance their professional skills to teach unemployed adult learners in Austria?

Data was collected in 3 phases, which included interviewing eighteen trainers and 2 managers, and distributing open-ended questionnaires to 12 adult learners, reading documents and literature. The data analysed led to broad themes, which provided an analytical framework to manage the rich data. These themes were used to group the data into manageable chunks:

- Adult education in NSCV (special attention to labour market programmes)
- Perceptions of teaching quality and characteristics of a good trainer
- Continuing professional development
- Change in the organisation and administration

The methods of data collection focused on understanding and exploring views of how achievable strategies and their implementation could lead to effective learning for both trainer and learner. The literature found centred on theories and practice of building a strong community of learners (communities of practice, professional learning communities, continuing professional development) and teaching quality. In spite of the shared understanding and tacit knowledge among the stakeholders, there is still a wide range of viewpoints as to what professional

development of trainers is and how best it can be done.

The literature review revealed that very little has been provided for trainers within unemployment institutions compared to teachers in schools in Austria. To answer the research questions, I selected a qualitative case study within Grounded Theory approach. It was an advantage because it enabled me to collect data and analyse it simultaneously, and to do follow-ups of issues; to search relevant literature, to go after the next data sources or samples, and to revise my interview questions. As the research came to end, my interview questions had undergone significant changes compared to the beginning of the research. The processes of revisiting the analysis and even participants or returning to the literature for clarification, led to identifying common themes that appear in the thesis.

Data selection, especially the quotations to present in this thesis, was a challenging experience that took so much time because careful judgement had to be made to complement the emerging themes. It was important to represent the perspectives and interpretations of the participants in a straightforward manner. At the same time, I would like to acknowledge that in some instances where repetition has occurred, it was used to demonstrate different aspects in the study and to create a profound understanding of the research problem under investigation.

The following section focuses on policy matters.

#### 1.4 Trainer policy in Austria

The complexity of the systems that employ trainers in Austria are so diverse that it is almost impossible to get a clear picture of who should identify themselves as trainers and what kind of training is actually needed (Weber et al., 2012). Even at the European level there is lack of information about aspects of the profession or even the kind of skills or competences they should possess (ALPINE- Adult Learning Professions in Europe, 2008). Studies carried out by the European Commission (2008) in 27 member countries, focused on understanding the adult learning staff, and recommended key improvements and implementation activities. However, the contradictions are further seen in the trainers' roles and uncommon professional development initiatives (Lassnigg, 2011). There is no standard framework for work (professionalisation) compared to other professions, which reflects a competitive nature (Hackl and Friesenbichler, 2014). These researchers further point out that there is no standardised training for professionals like in other fields. The trainers seem to be overshadowed by teachers in academic institutions.

One of the recent developments for trainers has been to instil a reference framework for competences at European level, which was meant to provide a standard, but this did not provide a description of educational qualifications or how learning would be measured. Rather there has been a measure to increase professionalisation at the organisational level (Hackl and Friesenbichler, 2014), an acquisition of Ö-Cert (Austrian certificate), which is a quality certificate for adult education providers. On the other hand, there is only one institution that is concerned with the certification of trainers, (WBA- Weiterbildung Akademie)

Austrian academy of continuing education institute, which was launched in 2007. It has the mandate to acknowledge and certify the trainers' prior qualifications or informally acquired competences through learning by doing or experiential learning, participation in seminars and workshops. The certification does not contain any assessment apart from a confirmation of attendance. It is proposed that lack of knowledge in the stipulated areas can be acquired by attending courses to fill the gaps. So, a certified adult trainer is identified as one who has qualified in key areas of adult education and the processes of validation are based on the ECTS (European credit transfer system).

Generally, what occurs in most adult learning institutions is that the trainers have even higher qualifications in other areas with little or no knowledge in adult education. This is because the requirements for employment demanded by different providers range from a university degree to work experience, therefore the labour market for trainers seems to be segmented (Lassnigg, 2011). CEDEFOP (2012) suggested that the qualifications are not regulated and are only specified by individual institutions. Further, even in-service education and training of staff is not regulated. There is no clear professional model for trainers, apart from the 'train-the trainer' training, and each provider focuses on different aspects (Weber et al., 2012). The variations include a mixture of leading seminars, presentation techniques, moderation and performance or coaching, methods (didactic) and conflict management. For the public employment service the trainer criteria are connected to providers, which should include courses in gender and diversity, and special education (Weber et al., 2012). However, the trainer courses are short term, running between 8-9 weeks. The training is too general to meet the

needs of unemployed learners. Sava and Lupou (2009) and Misra (2011) insist that there is a need for well-qualified staff to support and enhance adult learning.

Lassnigg (2007, 2011) an Austrian senior researcher in advanced studies indicated some of the contradictions, which have failed to support professional learning and seem to inhibit the development of lifelong learning strategies and professional development of trainers. He argued that the discrepancy between the teachers and trainers is obvious because those teachers who have qualified as educationist have a better chance. They have higher job security and regulated pay scales; therefore, the contrast between them and the trainers in the labour market programmes is so immense, with low wages, high job insecurity and are placed in several different market segments each with different conditions.

Furthermore, the demand for trainers is high because the focus is to re-integrate unemployed people into the labour market. More importantly, the need for well-equipped trainers is the focus of this study, driven by the fact that there is no regulation of trainers in educational policies. Moreover, the recruitment and selection procedures are based on so many individualised qualifications, mostly lacking in pedagogical knowledge of teaching adult learners. The European community invests lots of money in retraining the adult learners for employment but little or no money is spent on equipping trainers with competencies to manage this target group (CEDEFOP, 2010). In addition, those who may wish to develop themselves may not afford because of low wages, lack of time and other commitments like having second jobs.



First, what affects trainer development is that the majority of the trainers join the field quite late in their professional lives either as a result of loss of work or change from another profession. Secondly, the work contracts are mostly short term and therefore there is a lot of movement, which creates lack of continuity in teaching and learning (Weber et al., 2012; Lassnigg, 2011) Thirdly, although the European Policy Papers and Declaration (CEDEFOP, 2009) aim at increasing labour participation by encouraging measures like life-long learning, the contradiction is that many member states, Austria included have not targeted the trainer in the unemployment sector. Finally, most researchers agree that there does not exist a common framework that can be used to assess the mechanism in these institutions to determine what is happening because education is provided by a wide range of providers, from private companies, organisation, associations and private individuals.

An earlier development is the 2003 Adult Education Promotion Act that takes into consideration voluntary in-service and training of staff. Lately, there has been a recognition and need for change by the European Commission (2012). However, in the Austrian context the issue has been reluctantly placed on the policy agenda, as part of development of lifelong learning strategies. Although some experts have made effort to create programmes like ‘Empowering language professionals’- a contribution of the European Centre for Modern languages in Graz (Austria) to innovation in language teaching and learning, they have failed to address trainers in the unemployment sectors (Martyniuk and Silvensky, 2012).

Since 2011, Austria is involved in pursuing lifelong learning strategy (LLL2020)

and it is hoped that by 2018, the European guidelines for validating non-formal and informal learning may increase individual's value of skills and knowledge obtained in other forms of learning. A new initiative in adult education is the recognition that trainers can have a great influence on teaching and learning for unemployed learners.

### **1.5 Austrian adult education policy**

The importance of adult education in Austria, especially the labour market programmes of unemployed people has been recognised, accepted and influenced by the policy-makers (OECD, 2004a). Furthermore, there is an awareness of utilising learning to improve economic standards as stated in the Bologna Process (2007, 2009). The Bologna Process was launched in the Bologna declaration of 1999, as one of the main voluntary processes at European level today implemented in 48 states, which define the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) and aims at responding to challenges. The initiative was to foster a European harmonisation of educational programmes and to provide comparable systems. In order to fight unemployment, lifelong learning and continuing professional development are recognised as strategies to increase employability and international competitiveness (Bologna Process, 2012). Further developments are seen in the Bologna Process (2015:2-3) where the main goals are, 1) To enhance the quality and relevance of learning and teaching, 2) Foster the employability of graduates throughout their working lives, 3) Make the system more inclusive, and 4) Implement structural reforms.

First, Austria defines adult education in terms of educational activities that include teaching, educational management and libraries, counselling and

guidance, and supervision of groups (Frisenbichler and Hackl, 2014). Secondly, age and prior acquired education are also considered. These researchers further explain that the following terms refer to adult education: continuing education, vocational training, lifelong learning or further education especially when some kind of initial vocational education or training has been completed.

Other developments can be seen in the commitment of the federal government to allocate funds and empower external partners to set up training institutions for unemployed people. The mandate of facilitating and subsidising adult education is enacted in the Federal Act on the Promotion of Adult Education and Public Libraries of 1973 (amended in 1990 and 2003) evident in Blaschek (1992) and Frisenbichler and Hackl (2014). There is a widespread availability of different programmes run through collective provisions that are grouped in terms of employers and public employment service, churches (non-profit organisations), social and economic partners, and learners (Grubb and Gardner 2007).

In recent years other private providers have emerged and compete for these services, which relate to my working environment. The complexity of the systems employed by each provider determines the priorities given regarding resources, number of participants, and the kind of trainers to employ and the programmes to implement. (See appendix 9 for types of labour market programmes).

### **1.5.1 Labour market programmes for the unemployed in Austria**

In Austria, adult education aims at responding to current socio-economic challenges by providing services for the disadvantaged groups as argued by Grubb and Gardner (2007) and OECD (2007). Generally, an increase in migration and

other factors have also influenced education and issues surrounding unemployment. In addition, another key aspect, hardly mentioned in the literature, that also influences adult education in Austria, is the system of elementary-secondary education, where children at the age of 10 have to make 'definite' decisions for their life career.

The Federal Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Consumer Protection have the responsibility for the labour market programmes through the Public Service Agency (PES). The focus in my institution is the long-term unemployed people (Faulstich and Ebner, 1985; Gruber, 2003; Grubb and Gardner, 2007; Lassnigg, 2011). What is clear is that the PES does not administer educational services directly but contracts private and non-governmental organisation through competitive bidding. Which links New Stars Vocational College as a private provider for these services. Maier (2003) reports that there are so many providers, which is consistent with findings in most literature on Austrian adult education. It is argued that the biggest profit-makers are private institutions, private trainers and consultant groups. Due to lack of valid statistical data, the estimations show that there are about 1,500 or more private providers today. Lassnigg (2011) like Schlögl and Gruber (2003) report that the heterogeneity among these providers is seen in terms of courses offered, set goals and the quality of offer. From the literature, there seems to be a drawback in terms of the complexity of policy decisions and implementation of long-term goals (Lassnigg and Schneeberger, 1997).

The PES courses are considered as short and quick solutions which fail to have a long term goal, but what is clear is that the labour programmes and the education

system are independent of one another as acknowledged by Grubb (2007). It can be argued that there is an information gap between the labour market statistics and the education statistics creating a difficulty in understanding the technicalities of the labour market programmes (Lassnigg and Schneeberger, 1997). My understanding is that the PES has a major responsibility of placement rather than training, one that is consistent with the PES legislation as supported by a study carried out by OECD (2007). However, new developments show that since 2014, the PES focus has changed to enable workers under the classification of ‘special workers’ to get scholarships to attend training between 1-3 years, in order to gain a diploma certificate in areas like building and woodwork, electric and electronic areas, health care, kindergarten, metal work and social education. Parallel to this, is Schlögl and Gruber (2003) who suggested that the labour market should focus on lifelong learning for all people so as to meet the developmental changes today.

## Conclusion

This section has outlined the rationale for the study, setting and contextual issues and study processes. It has also explained trainer policy, Austrian adult education policy and unemployment policy within the labour market programmes. These issues have revealed the complexity and contradictions in policy decisions but also provided valuable insight into understanding trainers’ lack of identity and labour market programmes, and difficulties of unemployed learners. On the other hand, emphasised the need for improvements and implementations of necessary skills.

Chapter 2 will outline the literature review that builds up the conceptual framework that informed the study.

## **Chapter 2**

### **2 Literature review**

#### **2 Introduction**

My study is concerned with the uniqueness of the Austrian context; there is very little research on trainer quality and practice within adult education that is related to unemployed learners. Relevant fields of studies were searched and the literature review in this section was integrated to form the foundation. The section starts with a discussion on how I developed a conceptual framework based on three key concepts, professionalisation of trainers, policy context, theories of learning and research concerned with the nature of learning, implications for teaching and the role of trainers. Then the literature review focuses on notions and perceptions of quality teaching, and continuing professional development.

#### **2.1 Developing a conceptual framework based on three key concepts**

There is very little research on improving trainer professional skills within unemployment provisions, so this thesis focused on three concepts: teaching quality, adult learning theories and continuing professional development to provide a rationale as well as a tool for the integration and interpretation of data. The key argument is to have an effective trainer who can improve teaching quality for unemployed learners. For the trainers to understand how teaching quality can be implemented, it is essential that they are aware of adult learning theories and even understand them, so that they can make informed decisions as to which theories are suitable for the unemployment classes. To meet their own needs and those of the

learners, engagement in continuing professional development activities is proposed. This is viewed as a modality for trainers to fill up gaps in knowledge and professional skills necessary to master daily challenges of teaching unemployed learners. Some of the learners' complex issues touch on; socio-economic complications, learning difficulties, serious health problems and addiction issues, illiteracy, school dropouts, unskilled workers coupled with demands of a competitive job market for skills upgrade. These concepts provide a foundation and organization for the improvement plan for trainers within unemployment provisions who have little or no knowledge of teaching adults even though they are professionals in other specialised areas.

The need for trainers to explore theories of adult learning is to enable them to define reliable procedures and methods in managing a non-traditional classroom within a background of little or no training and, lack of induction and mentoring systems. These theories of adult learning, Knowles' (1984) andragogy self-directed learning perspective, Rogers' (1951, 1956, 1969) teacher as a facilitator and Jarvis' (1990, 1992, 1995, 2010) experience and reflection in learning helped me make sense of issues in the case study, and also to get more insight about situations that seemed invisible in the daily work of trainers.

Teaching quality defines the power of an effective trainer who can encourage and show genuine care for learners with special needs. These trainers have direct influence in enhancing learners' attitude towards learning and even increasing their achievement and self-confidence as pointed out in literature on teacher quality and teaching quality (Darling-Hammond, 1997; Hollins, 2011; Hemmer, 2014). The



focus is on the trainers' ability to use a wide range of teaching strategies skilfully, based on pedagogical and andragogical knowledge. The argument in the thesis is that trainer effectiveness is exemplified by far more complex set of qualities than one's professional preparation. It contains strategies like adaptability, being patient and possessing self-assessment or reflective skills. To promote effective trainers, there is need to provide feedback and guidance that can help them improve on their own professional skills. Furthermore, improvement relates to personal growth, and assisting trainers to learn and to reflect, so as to better their practice. This suggests the need for continuous professional growth and development, which depicts a commitment to competence and quality of teaching.

The 'trainer' as a job is not yet recognised like other professions, for example, teachers who undergo initial training. Therefore, the need and demand for well-defined continuing professional development is advanced in (Hustler et al., 2003; Bolam and Weindling, 2006). The argument put forward for CPD is important because it brings along benefits for the individual, their work and learners too. Some of the benefits of continuing professional development include empowering trainers to gain skills, to maintain relevant knowledge and skills in delivering teaching quality. Especially, keeping up with rapid changing trends and demands of new technology but also being able to participate and contribute meaningfully to trainer practice. In particular, it opens up possibilities of networking and creating a deeper understanding of learner challenges with practical solutions. Although, continuing professional development is not mandated by the organization, I strongly believe that it is a personal responsibility for trainers to acquire and update up their knowledge, so that they can deliver quality teaching that meets the expectations of learners and

other stakeholders. The necessity for professionalisation of trainers is discussed below, and professional development and relevant CPD that fit the trainers' needs is discussed in section 2.6.

### **2.1.1 Professionalisation of trainers**

So far no attempts have been made to professionalise trainers in Austria (Lassnigg, 2011). Professionalising trainers may set the stage for improvements in teaching unemployed adults but that alone is not enough. There is need for national policy reforms to spell out the career ladder for trainers and to provide financial support that will empower them to collaborate in designing curriculum and training activities.

The inconsistencies and ambiguities that characterize trainers' work are well described in (Lassnigg, 2011). Trainers have no identity and are not sure how they should define themselves when compared to teachers in schools (Bouyssieres and Trinquier, 2011; Weber et al., 2012). The limits of current research show that the field of trainer practice needs to develop in order for this area to accumulate a sound body of knowledge and research that trainers can draw on. One is logically led to conclude that educational policies and labour market requirements have failed to reach a common ground on fundamental issues regarding trainer professionalisation.

To date, the field of adult education has not succeeded in developing a foundation of knowledge comparable to that found in the teaching profession. The argument is to build on trainers' prior knowledge because the trainers already have formal qualifications in other areas; the main emphasis should be to provide practical

knowledge and experience that could serve as a framework for informing the development and improvement of trainer practice. Lack of effective organs for directing and professionalising trainers lessen the importance of this area of adult learning and training (Lassnigg and Schneeberger, 1997). The suggestion is that before ways can be found to overcome obstacles connected with poor trainer practice, it is important to encourage trainers to take part in professional development activities that enable them to cope with complex teaching scenarios. Professional development is a potential strategy for addressing some of the issues because trainers can talk about common problems collaboratively. The opportunities for collaboration may enable trainers to fill gaps in knowledge and skills.

Below I focus on policy and legislative context.

## **2.2 Policy context**

To enable the reader to understand the context in which the research was conducted, I have presented policy and legislative matters of unemployment. In Austria, the unemployment rate is calculated in terms of people looking for work, which is considered as a percentage of the labour force. According to the public employment service the unemployment rate reached its highest point at 10.9% as of January 2016, (Austria Statistik, 2016).

So, lack of employment poses not only hardship for adults but also creates challenges for the country. It also hinders economic development as the resources are spent on welfare payment in terms of budget cuts (Lassnigg and Schmid, 2014). To meet the challenges, the country has strategically planned to raise employment

possibilities by following Europe 2020 strategy. The agenda proposes four areas of interest to my research that of reforming labour market to skills development of the workforce (European commission, 2010b). Therefore, vocational education and training (VET) then plays a key role in ‘reintegrating’ unemployed people into the labour market by participating in lifelong learning.

The labour market in Austria is part of social policy whose labour market employs both active and passive labour market instruments to deal with unemployment (Fink, 2009). The indication is that; two institutions are responsible, the Federal Ministry for Labour, Social Affairs and Consumer Protection (Sozialministerium) and the Public Employment Service. The legal framework of Austria’s labour market is stipulated in the law, in the Public Employment Service Act (AMSG-Arbeitsmarktservicegesetz), in the Unemployment Insurance Act (Arbeitslosenversicherungsgesetz), and in the Act Governing Unemployment of Foreign National (AusIBG-Ausländerbeschäftigungsgesetz).

The PES was established under the Unemployment Service Act in 1994 and took over all the responsibilities concerned with labour. The Unemployment Insurance Act deals with the liability of unemployment insurance and qualifications for unemployment benefits and unemployment assistance. PES is a decentralised organisation made up of one main headquarters, 9 provincial offices and 99 regional offices.

The Federal Ministry for Labour, Social Affairs and Consumer Protection has duties to define and decide on policy goals, supervision, evaluation, monitoring, improving

quality and increasing transparency (Grubb, 2007:12). It focuses on four main areas, 1) Skills training schedules, training programmes, subsistence allowance during training to cover travelling costs, 2) Employment subsidies in (socio-economic enterprise and community projects as well as company integration), 3) Support measure (counselling and guidance centres, childcare subsidies, business set-up schemes), and 4) Activating measures which include allowances for older workers, unemployment benefits and assistance during training.

Further, the Federal Ministry for Labour, Social Affairs and Consumer Protection is concerned with passive, active and activating labour market policy. In the passive labour market policy, one is eligible to receive training if they are registered with the PES; is willing to work and ready to take up a job, be part of the Labour Market Policy Scheme and has also paid unemployment contributions for a specific period of time (Schlögl, 2003; Schneeberger, 2006). Fink (2009) argues that the hard measures taken to ensure cooperation from the unemployed adult, is withdrawal or suspension of the unemployment benefits or reduction of the duration period especially if the beneficiary refuses a suitable job offer or a training scheme.

Active labour market policy refers to those measures, which promote a better functioning of the labour market. An agreement is reached through a contract between the PES and those affected. Active measures are seen as preventive actions that can be taken before unemployment actually occurs. Key measures of active labour market policy are: 1) Increasing the transparency of the market, 2) Subsidisation of initial and further vocational training in order to fit the skills of the labour force to the needs of the market, 3) Promotion of the mobility of the

workforce, 4) Support in overcoming personal problems, 5) Temporary subsidised employment via recruitment grants to facilitate entry into working life (Labour market policy, 2012, Sozialministeriumservice, 2016).

Active labour market policy targets those people who have difficulties in finding work for various reasons. For examples:

- Long-term unemployment
- Absence from the labour market while bringing up children
- A lack of language skills
- No qualifications or obsolete qualifications
- Older age
- Health problems, disabilities
- Addictions (alcohol, medicines, illegal drugs)

As a result, a significant number of trainers work with people who are unemployed and disadvantaged by the competitive market because of a range of factors. Ried (1995) argued that these trainers are faced by challenges of building a meaningful learning environment, managing past negative learning experiences, and even changing the learners' attitude to learning. He goes on to suggest a few measures to cope and increase learners' confidence especially in moments where they tend to avoid challenges and ability to persist but he fails to suggest the kind of skills that the trainers require or should have so as to implement these changes. The unemployment training services indicates increasing enrolments and therefore the demand for trainers has gone up.

The following section explains who unemployed learners are and relevant theories of learning.

### **2.3 The adult learner and theories of adult learning in adult education**

The importance of understanding the adult learner within the unemployment context is a key step for the trainers to gain a valuable insight into the nature of learning for both learner and trainer. It is driven by the need to explore suitable interventions due to difficulties encountered in the trainer's work.

Adult learners are defined as multi-dimensional with different needs and learning behaviour as compared to children (Auer, 2012). Auer suggests that they have a wide range of abilities, socio-economic and cultural background, job experiences and motivation. Furthermore, Scrivener (2009) an experienced author in language teaching looks at ways in which learners differ in a class and suggests how a teacher can work with their differences and similarities. In terms of age, number, level of education and intelligence, different learning styles, gender, character and resources but also considering the teacher's influence on the class mood. Although his suggestions are valuable, they seem to be too general for the unemployment context where the desire is to improve employability or develop new skills or change career.

Influenced by unemployment policies, many European countries including Austria have adapted to adult learning in the labour market programmes. Learning is no longer confined to the schools only. Illeris (2004), a Danish researcher in adult learning argued that many adults who seek education today are unskilled or unemployed. He looked at how adults learn and continue to do so. He based his

concept of learning on learning and competence. Illeris (2009:10) points out these processes in 3 dimensions of contemporary learning: 1) Functionality which includes capacity and understanding, 2) Sensitivity which involves incentives for learning, motivation, emotion and volition and, 3) Integration which is making sense of learning and interacting with other learners.

Other issues about how adults learn have been widely debated but today it is no longer an issue whether adults can learn. Recent developments and significant contributions to adult learning can be found in lifelong learning studies. Belanger (2011), a Canadian researcher proposed that an adult learner could enter the educational system at any point in their lives. But there are still assumptions, that the adult learner is someone who missed the opportunity to attend formal schooling for various reasons. From the literature I have read, what is clear is that unemployed learners face circumstances that can be described as difficult and unique (Gruber, 2003; Fellingner-Fritz and Steiner, 2011). Coupled with the labour requirement and challenges, the learner is put in a position to see their inadequacies and shortcomings in skills and qualifications (Lassnigg and Schmid, 2014). In this case they are forced to find alternatives or supportive measures, and therefore return to education to improve their potentiality.

The learners have their own perceptions and conceptions of learning developed from prior learning experiences, which has implications for future learning or training. Dart et al. (2000) indicated that a learner's conception of learning affects how they experience learning. In a classroom environment, the conception of learning is strongly connected to teaching rather than looking at learning as a learner-centred activity or learning to build a knowledge base useful for the labour market.



Other aspects that seem to influence the adult learners' conception of learning are connected to contradictions in the educational policy that can be seen in the definition of basic schooling and lifelong learning (Grubb and Gardner, 2007). Basic schooling is recognised as set within organised structures of learning, this has considerable implications for the trainers within the unemployment context. The researchers' views are linked to teaching methodologies because learning maybe structured differently.

Teaching is made up of several complex procedures but the quality is dependent on the trainers' competence, and adapting to specific learners within this particular context. Stentzel (1986), a German researcher, studied learning difficulties of the adult learner and concluded that these difficulties should not be ignored while planning for financial resources, teaching methods and target groups. Similarly, Volmari et al. (2009) pointed out that teachers in his study had frequently mentioned an increase in disruptive behaviour among students. This can be a very challenging situation for the trainers and therefore they need to improve on how to handle this type of learner.

### **2.3.1 The nature of adult learning**

This thesis will not dwell on defining what learning is, as there are multiple definitions that indicate the complexities of learning. The intention is to understand how adults learn. Contemporary adult learning theories have their origin in behaviourism, psychology, humanism and social learning.

A key theory in adult learning is andragogy, which has its origin in Alexander Kapp, a German who first used the word in 1833; he made a distinction about how adults

learn from children. The word andragogy is a Greek word, which means ‘man-leading’ while pedagogy means ‘child-leading’. The theory became famous through Malcolm Knowles an American educator in 1968. He proposed that ‘andragogy is art and a science of helping adults learn’ Knowles (1984:43-44). He suggested four assumptions about the characteristics of the adult learner, which are different from a child learner.

- Self-concept, as a person matures they move from a dependent personality towards a self-directed human being
- Adult learner accumulates experiences that are a source of learning
- Readiness to learn is oriented towards developmental tasks
- Changes perspectives and shift from subject-centredness to performance-centredness

In 1984, he propounded that the 4 principles of adult learning should focus on adults’ need to be involved in facilitating their learning by being engaged in learning. Further, he advanced the use of experience in learning, in terms of both successful and failed experiences. Knowles argued that adults are interested in learning topics that are relevant and will have a meaningful impact on their lives, and it would be useful if the focus in adult learning was geared towards problem-centredness with role-plays, group work and above all consider that adult learners are self-directed in their learning. Similarly, Scrivener (2009:3) strongly argues, ‘people learn more by doing it themselves rather than being told’, and from practical experiences. In addition, he argues that the role of the teacher is to enable learning rather than being ‘over-helpful’ which may get in the way of learning. It would be useful to allow the learners to become aware of how they are learning, for example to reflect, to explore

the processes, resources and tactics of the most conducive way of learning. Like Knowles, he believes it is essential that the learners be allowed to make mistakes and learn from them, which is also applicable to the learning teacher.

Other arguments suggest that the learner is intelligent and human, so that learning involves the whole person. It is therefore necessary to understand that learners bring with them a wide range of less noticeable issues; like their experiences, needs, background, memories, anxieties, fears, sickness, ambitions and wishes (Scrivener, 2009). Sometimes, prior learning experiences may get in the way of learning, which may require the trainer to respond appropriately (Knowles, 1984). From both of these arguments, it can be inferred that new learning will be extended or built on earlier learning experiences but this may be different for different learners. It is therefore unacceptable to expect the learner to be a 'Tabula rasa' blank slate. Knowles goes on to point out that the teacher can at times hinder learning since teaching is about working with learners. There is need for more knowledge other than just methodology and subject content. On the contrary, Pratt (2005) criticised adult educators who assume andragogy is the best way to teach adults because there are other important perspectives too. His arguments are based on experiences gained from research with 250 teachers in cross-cultural settings around the world.

Additional developments in the nature of learning include what Carl Rogers (1951, 1956, 1969) suggested. Rogers was an American humanistic psychologist who used his psychotherapy knowledge and developed 10 main ideas that he used to summarise the role of the teacher as a facilitator. He suggested 3 core teacher characteristics that may assist in creating a positive effective learning atmosphere: 1) Respect -being non-judgemental and regard for the other, 2) Empathy -being able to

see things from the other person's perspective, and 3) Authenticity- being oneself. Rogers (1969:164-166) strongly believed that these qualities could lead to effective and supportive communication in the classroom, where honesty and trust become embedded in learning. As a result the learners work with less fear and are able to take challenges in learning. Their self-confidence is increased and they can take charge of their learning. Rogers reached the conclusion that the teacher should be a facilitator. His strongest belief was that every person could achieve their goals, reach self-actualisation, which is consistent with Maslow's assumptions on theories of motivation (McLeod, 2014).

Further developments indicate that Peter Jarvis (1990, 1992, 1995, 2010) a researcher in adult education put particular importance on experience and reflection as ways of learning. However, later on he raised awareness of the ageing body and its role in learning within educational processes. Jarvis (2010:5) pointed out the 'physiological loss that is significant in the process of adult learning: loss of visual acuity, loss in audio acuity, loss of energy and the problems of homeostatic adjustment'. This is important in understanding the adult classroom, where sometimes the adults believe that some of these losses influence the way they learn and therefore underestimate their own powers to learn, thereby confirming strongly the perception that learning is only done in the early years.

In using Knowles' (1980) model of andragogical theory, McGrath (2009:2) examined how adults learn in her research and concluded that they dropped-out of class 'because they were not comfortable with the teaching style that was adopted'. Her argument points out that adult learners need to know why they are learning new knowledge before they can participate. Equally, supporting this view is Chen (2014)

in his study of non-traditional adult learners, he agreed that learners are self-directed but through transformative learning and critical reflection learning they could develop personally.

In later developments of andragogy theory, Knowles (1998) noticed the need for pedagogy. He saw pedagogy and andragogy on a continuum rather than as opposing strategies (Merriam, 2014). What emerges from the literature is that these theories are interconnected and have contrasting views regarding learning, so there is no one dominant theory argues Belanger (2011), a key researcher in life long learning. But it is important for the trainer to be aware of these theories of learning when teaching the adult learner

### **2.3.2 Motivation for learning**

Motivation is the most crucial factor in learning. Day (1999:xi) argues that both

Intrinsic motivation- that drives a person to follow one's interest, acquire knowledge and become more capable, and extrinsic motivation- the confidence that the goals of learning are achievable and valuable.

He further argues that it important to be aware of factors that encourage motivation as well as discourage it. Teachers' learning is motivated by the need to improve teaching quality through developing competences. On the other hand, Day is concerned about what motivates teachers to engage in self-directed learning, and questions the effectiveness of planned programmes. The teachers' learning should be directed towards benefitting the learners, by meeting their needs and interests in a changing context that leads to better learner behaviour. To meet all these challenges through learning, Day (1999) advocates for continuing professional development.

However, he questions how this learning can be facilitated and supported by the management. He further points out other factors that could affect learning, which are school culture and short-term goals.

It is also important to focus on aspects that may steer an adult learner to learn, which could be: the need to accomplish a goal or improve, and solve a problem or acquire the ability to use a skill. Likewise, Knowles (in Knowles, Holton and Swanson 2005) quoted in Chen (2014:3) argued ‘that an adult learner has the innate desire to learn, and is an active agent in planning and execution of learning, and values immediate and relevant problem solving based learning’. These aspects are also reflected in Maslow’s (1943, 1954) theory of motivation and hierarchy of needs, he identified self-actualisation as a driving factor in learning, consequently, the trainers should be aware of this and facilitate the learners to realise their potentials. Day (1999) suggested that a key goal in his research is to help young people and teachers to develop and maintain motivation to learn both collectively and individually. Therefore, fostering teachers’ commitment to learning is reflected in the quality of teaching and outcomes.

The following section outlines the implications for teaching and the trainers’ role.

#### **2.4 Implications for teaching and the role of trainers**

Learning to teach in more effective ways is linked to the trainer being a learner and learning continuously. From the 3 perspectives of learning and arguments outlined above: self-directed learning, experiential learning and reflective learning. There seems to be no ideal art of teaching and learning. Moreover, through observations and practice, it is possible to identify strategies and approaches that can work better

(Pratt, 2005). The goal is to become aware of these alternatives and be able to choose the most adequate option depending on the lesson and circumstances. Scrivener (2009) suggests building a 'toolkit' and 'core survival' techniques and guidelines that are suitable. He further advises filtering out what does not work in specific situations.

Knowles' (1984) self-directed learning perspective seems to be an expected characteristic in adult education, the assumption that the adult learner has an internal motivation to learn, may be questionable because external motives can also lead to learning. In addition, this perspective has been criticised for being too restrictive and not representative (Pratt, 2005). Brookfield (1995) called for more research especially in linking the self-directedness with other forms of learning, experience and learning activities within a stated time. Other criticism is directed at its failure to take into account the social and cultural background of the learners. But the mind-set is that this kind of learning aims at considering the learner's motivation for learning and readiness to learn facilitated through self-directed learning. This seems to be a useful approach for the unemployment context.

The second perspective, Knowles argued for was using the learners' experiences as a form of resource. In the ESL (English as a second language) classroom, the teacher acquires a 'facilitator role' and encourages the learners to use the language themselves. This may enable the learners to take a leading role and do more rather than just listening. Learning and teaching is then grounded in experience. Kolb (1984:267) developed the experiential learning cycle, which involves 4 phases. It is conceptualised in 'doing it yourself' by using the knowledge and experiences we have, even to review new knowledge. Critics of this theory have labelled it as

restrictive and superficial because there are loopholes in reconstructing experiences (Hart, 1992). Others have suggested that an experience is not fixed and may undergo changes, which could be influenced by culture and history. The argument here is attached to the fact that experiences are not neutral (Brookfield, 1995), and it may be difficult to define which kinds of experiences are applicable to an ESL language class. In addition, the relevance is that it provides a theoretical framework for the trainer in teaching and learning in an adult class, and also a reason to move away from the 'traditional' methods of teaching in enabling learning. This can be achieved through learning interactions, building a positive atmosphere and effective relationships.

The third perspective, learning as reflection becomes important in questioning ones' own practice. For the trainers to extend their professional knowledge and competences, there is need to reflect both individually and with others in various ways (Day, 1999). Trainers need to be competent in intellectual and affective support, to respect adults and enable them to bring experience into the class; these aspects seem to be common in all the theories. Schön (1983:61-62) developed the term 'reflective practitioner'. This term became popular because it seemed to connect critical thinking with the teachers' experiences. He proposed two concepts for teachers, 'reflect-on-action' and 'reflect-in-action' that emphasised critical reflection in a teachers' growth. Criticism on 'reflection-in-action' was directed at the fact that there was limited accountability of the social conditions of workplace learning. Not only could reflection be triggered by negative aspects but also get affected by failure to measure the time taken to perceive professional actions (Eraut, 1994). Questions were also raised about the period taken to reflect and the suitability



of the context linked to other several factors, but there was uncertainty about matters of development. The advantages for the trainer are that it would provide opportunities for evaluating challenging situations and reacting accordingly.

Trainers are not ‘therapists’ but the experience and expertise they need also includes the affective dimension ‘emotional intelligence’ (Goleman, 1995:34). Goleman in his research identified features that defined emotional intelligence, which teachers require to carry out their work satisfactorily; ‘the ability to motivate oneself and persist in the face of frustrations; to control the impulse and delay gratification, to regulate ones mood and keep distress from swamping the ability to think; to empathise and hope’. Although, he has based most of his work on psychology, the key areas he has chosen reflect a kind of intelligence that is applicable to trainers’ work of managing challenges of unemployed learners. He pointed out, 1) Knowing one’s emotion, 2) Managing emotions, 3) Recognising emotions in others- empathy and, 4) Handling emotions (Goleman, 1995:43-4). These factors may seem too basic but are crucial as additional professional skills, necessary to manage unemployed learners. Day (1999) argues that it is incorrect to dismiss the role of emotion in reflection by failing to recognise the likelihood of positive and negative effects in teaching and learning.

The dimension may help the trainers to teach with love, with an attitude of care, understanding, and genuine interest that includes tolerance, patience and reassuring the learners by building confidence in them. Some of these aspects are found in Fay and Funk’s (1995) research on teaching with love and logic in managing challenging and frustrating behaviour in the classroom.

Trainers in New Star Vocational College have a wide range of backgrounds and are influenced by their own beliefs on the nature of learning, working experiences and from their own prior learning experiences. It can be argued that the way they teach is either based on observations of their former teachers' models of classroom organisation and student teacher relationship or learnt from teaching sessions in courses. In order to cope with the working demands and additional responsibilities of teaching, Chen (2014) and OECD (2009) concluded that trainers should be equipped with pedagogical skills in line with learner-centred approach of modern pedagogical theory. My argument is for a combination of andragogy and pedagogy as argued by Knowles (1998), and other relevant theories as the need arises to improve on quality of teaching.

The next section looks at quality teaching in the context of unemployed learners.

## **2.5 Perceptions of quality teaching**

Research on teaching has shown that there is no common definition of quality teaching although there are certain similar factors (Darling-Hammond, 1997; Hemmer, 2014). What teachers do in the classroom is linked to students' learning outcomes and context as argued by Looney (2011). In other words, not all teaching practices promote learning. It is therefore important to identify effective practices of teaching by looking at what makes up quality teaching. Hemmer (2014) proposed that quality teaching is engaging learners in their learning, deepening their knowledge, and being flexible and creative. From this perspective, some stakeholders, researchers, educational practitioners, policy-makers and even learners reject the traditional ways of teaching, whereby the teacher plays a dominant role while the learners take a passive role.

In relation to this, General Teaching Council for England (GTCE, 2011:8) defined quality teaching, 'as teaching that leads to effective learning for pupils of every ability and disposition'. So, teaching quality is then equated with good teaching that leads to successful experiences for both teacher and learners.

Darling-Hammond's (1997) in her study argued that, investing in quality teaching, is to re-invent teacher preparation and professional development because teacher effectiveness is tied to the teacher's knowledge of subject matter, student learning and teaching methods which are important elements of quality teaching. However, teacher preparation programmes have been criticised for offering fragmented and weak pedagogic structures (Hollins, 2011). Others have called for reforms in teacher education in order to address focused inquiry. On the other hand, Lampert and Graziani (2009) have strongly expressed the desire to have pedagogical practices that target specific learners. Likewise, Hollins (2011) refers to teaching as linked to essential skills, knowledge and understanding quality teaching in terms of the knowledge of the learners, learning subject, pedagogy and assessment. Further arguments presented focus on knowledge, which should include human growth and development, individual and group differences linked to learners' background and experience. Some of this information should be used to tailor lessons to fit the needs of the learners and to facilitate learning in the classroom. Knowledge of learning and its processes in the classroom are some of the effective professional skills for responding to the learners' needs. Teaching is then viewed from the cognitive abilities, performance in the classroom and the effects it has on students.

It can be argued that well-trained trainers are essential for the success of educational programmes aimed at responding to labour market's changing demands and

challenges. Therefore, there is need to improve and sustain trainers' teaching quality, which also calls for effective leadership to be put in place and to promote a culture of learning instead of only concentrating on measures of accountability by ignoring trainer professional development. Harris (2003) and Stoll et al. (2006) strongly believe that building support mechanisms and investing in teachers' inquiry, sharing leadership, collaborating through collective responsibility are some of the ways of ensuring that quality teaching is realised.

Although the literature seems to have documented very little on the trainers, they do play a big role in special programmes for adult education such as vocational and technical training. Even more, Hodkinson (1998:194) argued that, 'less is known about the trainer employed by private training institutions' which was also found in (Lassnigg, 2011). Further, Buck (2002) strongly pointed out that these tutors are not recognised as professionals by other academics; they lack a professional identity. However, the trainers in the labour market programmes are just too many to be ignored. There are proposals (Lankard, 1993:3) to improve their teaching quality capabilities by, 1) Induction of the setting, 2) Develop basic skills, 3) Provide refresher course for the experienced, 4) Specialised courses like counselling and assertiveness, and 5) Provide opportunities to develop themselves. Other suggestions are to provide access to high quality training, job security and collaborative professional development as in Hodkinson (1998), OECD (2010) and Hemmer (2014). However, budget cuts may be responsible for the recruitment of less experienced trainers who are put on temporary contracts, paid less and could be made redundant, argues Hodkinson (1998) and also echoed by Yoshioka, (2007) and

Lassnigg, (2011). This seems to concur with what happens in New Star Vocational College.

OECD (2004a) did a study entitled, Thematic Review in Austria, which revealed insufficient teaching methods that were concentrated around teacher-centredness and were unsuitable for adult learners. On the other hand, argue that it may be rather difficult to teach the unemployment programmes because the conditions leading to low-literacy are complex and difficult to understand. Earlier on, these researchers Day (1999), Hustler et al. (2003) and Guskey (2002) argued for developing trainers further. Consistent with the above suggestion is the proposal in OECD (1992:32) report that strongly asserts, ‘an expert, motivated and flexible teaching staff are the most vital component of high quality provisions’. In support of this statement, 10 countries participated in case studies OECD (1994) to identify effects of policies to improve quality of teaching. Indications showed that there were still challenges and the teacher’s role was changing. Some of the measures to improve the teacher’s quality were the use of INSET, but currently there is need to go beyond the traditional one-shot workshop as suggested by Hodkinson (1995) and Day (1997, 1999). These researchers criticise INSET as short, quick solutions that are fragmented. This approach does not focus on sustainability of teaching quality, it is insufficient but when combined with other strategies could be useful.

So what emerges from literature is the need to promote good teaching considering increasing demands for education by adult learners to meet new occupational demands. This has led to calls for exchange of policy improvement information and professional development in Hodkinson (1998), OECD (1999), Day (1999) and Darling-Hammond (2010).

The following sections discuss professional development and then outline the significance of developing professional skills through CPD.

## **2.6 Professional development**

In recent years, there has been minimal interest in national policies focused on trainer professional development, but what is obvious is that attention has been paid on the issue of ‘teacher quality’ and their potential to improve student learning and achievement outcome (Borko, 2004).

Professional development is considered as one way of the many mechanisms that institutions can use to help trainers learn to improve their skills during their teaching careers. Recent developments show that professional development is a topic that has been extensively researched, many researchers have developed strategies to indicate how professional development initiatives can be improved and made effective for educators (Darling-Hammond, 1999; Day, 1999; Guskey, 2002; Hustler et al., 2003; Adey, 2006)

In education, the term professional development is used to refer to a wide variety of formal or informal education. Formally, it is organized as a conference, workshop or seminar: collaborative learning among colleagues or advanced professional learning intended for educators to improve their professional knowledge, competence, skill, and effectiveness. However, professional development can also happen in informal contexts for example during coffee breaks where colleagues hold discussions, peer observation, individual reading and research.

In essence, professional development for trainers may comprise a wide range of topics and formats (Day, 1999). Institutions or private stakeholders may support professional development activities. In practice, sessions may range from a one-day conference to a three-week workshop or even lead to an extensive learning program. There are many options as to the choice of delivery, which could be through an individual or online training during working hours or after working hours, through group interactions or individual face-to-face context (Guskey, 2002; Hustler et al., 2003; Cordingley et al., 2003; Adey, 2006; Rose and Reynolds, 2007). Given the need to improve, departmental heads or subject leaders may facilitate experiences or engage expertise. Professional development typically occurs for educators mostly through learning in a setting where they can appropriately apply what they learn (Guskey, 2003), although other professional development may occur at other institutions of learning.

In the case of trainers, the following are examples of professional development areas,

- 1) Specialised training in varying teaching strategies and learning theories based on learners' needs and challenges
- 2) Effective teaching techniques for literacy skills to improve on learning difficulties like reading and writing
- 3) Learning psychological knowledge on personality differences, conflict management, how to identify learning difficulties and the role of slow learners in class
- 4) Role of mentoring new colleagues to provide guidance, feedback, models, and support
- 5) Improving technological knowledge
- 6) Learning how to teach job-related skills

- 7) Learning to acquire additional qualifications in teaching like CELTA, DELTA, post-graduate certificate in teaching or even advanced qualifications from other institutions.
- 8) Learning how to prepare learners for examinations
- 9) Correcting errors in the classroom and remedial activities
- 10) Working in teams to develop suitable teaching and learning material or to create peer-teaching lessons

The following sections focus on challenges involved in professional development and rationale for professional development.

#### **2.6.1 Some challenges**

Guskey (2003:4) questioned the criteria that constitute effective professional development, after the analysis he did, he described this as inconsistent and contradictory because of a wide range of models, diverse goals and objectives, aimed at different aspects of teaching and designed for teachers working in different settings. Further, he argued that programs are implemented at different times under different policy contexts. Therefore, in planning, facilitators may be faced by challenges when selecting and providing professional development opportunities. Key issues are: 1) Finding adequate time during working hours for trainer participation, 2) Getting sufficient funding when school budgets are tight, 3) Gaining sufficient support for professional development from the management, 4) Paying attention to interest or motivation and, 5) Considering trainer workload.

The importance of professional development cannot be ignored but a few researchers



debate against programs that are poorly planned, designed and implemented, or those that do not meet the needs of teachers. For example short programmes or workshops that do not relate directly to the teachers' work have been criticized as being ineffective especially, the one-size-fit-all (Hustler et al., 2003). Today, most researchers agree that a major feature of effective professional development is providing learning opportunities that are sustained over longer periods of time but are also interconnected to the daily work of the trainers. The proposed strategy is continuing professional development.

### **2.6.2 Rationale for continuing professional development**

First, the need for professional development arises from the fact that the trainers who teach adults in Austria have different experiences; some may have prior experience in teaching adults or qualifications in other areas of education or may have no teaching experiences at all. Secondly, much is not known about this type of trainer in the literature; although they are mostly hired on short-term contracts, receive less pay, face economic uncertainties, have little job security and inadequate medical health, these trainers play a significant role in adult institutions (Lassnigg, 2011; OECD, 2010)

The argument that emerges from literature is that these trainers are hardly categorised as professionals like teachers in schools, mostly there is confusion about their identity. As a result of their employment nature, the trainers hardly get time for coaching and mentoring; most times they learn through discovery and are given no opportunity or access to develop professionally. This is evident in Lassnigg (2011) and Yoshioka (2007). On the other hand, the policy-makers have failed to include the trainers in their interventions for reforms to raise the quality of education

received by adults. Darling-Hammond (2010) states that in strengthening and improving educational practice, there is need to use new methods of professional development that support academic standards, new curriculum and collaborative school cultures. The arguments presented are based on the fact that trainers are facing new challenges and increased expectations.

The following is a summary of the need for continuing professional development by various researchers (Day, 1999; Guskey, 2002; Hustler et al., 2003; Bolam and Weindling, 2006; Darling-Hammond, 2009; Rose and Reynolds, 2008, 2009; Stoll et al., 2012).

- To address the challenges that trainers face
- Enhance peer collaboration
- It is important for improving quality, performance and capabilities of staff
- To increase value and enhance the trainers' quality
- To better understand their teaching and learning needs
- Encourage trainers to meet regularly, share learning experiences and address the adult learners' needs
- Foster and encourage the designing of lessons, learning resources and assessments that may impact on the learners
- To create opportunities where trainers reflect, redefine teaching and learning goals as well as finding alternatives to suit their needs
- Build and maintain the morale of trainers
- Encourage trainers to be lifelong learners

### 2.6.3 Continuing professional development

So much has been written on professional development but there appears to be no consensus on a working definition of professional development (Bolam, 2002; Bredeson, 2002,). Further, Rose and Reynolds (2009) argue that professional development has been ill defined and teachers have difficulties defining the term. There are many terms which are used interchangeably for example staff development, In-Service, continuing education, self-improvement, on the job-learning and formal training. I have settled for Day's (1999:4) definition that is quite suitable because it encompasses key characteristics of professional development, I will adopt it as a working definition for CPD.

Professional development consists of all natural learning experiences and those conscious and planned activities which are intended to be of direct or indirect benefit to the individual, group or school, which contribute, through these, to the quality of education in the classroom. It is the process by which, alone and with others, teachers review, renew and extend their commitment as change agents to the moral purposes of teaching; and by which they acquire and develop critically the knowledge, skills and emotional intelligence essential to good professional thinking, planning and practice with children, young people and colleagues throughout each phase of their teaching lives.

The definition includes all forms of professional development in a teaching career. Interconnected with this definition is Guskey's (2002) argument that whatever professional development is initiated and implemented, the end goal should be to improve practice, student learning, change classroom practice, attitudes and beliefs and have an impact on learning outcomes of the pupil. Additionally, there is also need to provide opportunities where the teachers can engage in professional activities in terms of peer support and observation, reflection, assessment and feedback as in Day (1997) and Wenger (1998). This view is supported by conclusions reached by Rose and Reynolds (2008, 2009) who examined several

studies and argued for external support and a mode of collaborative CPD, but with an assumption that this would lead to teachers' self-efficacy, openness to ideas and changes in practice.

Sufficient evidence is found in Bolam and Weindling's (2006) study, which concluded that the impact of collaborative CPD was linked to improvements in both teaching and learning, changes in teacher behaviour that included increased self-confidence and self-efficacy, development of enthusiasm in working together, and greater commitment to changing practice.

This is tied to the idea of cultivating Communities of Practice (COP), which is useful in the perspective of knowing and learning. The concept was coined by Wenger and Lave (1991), which promotes learning by participation, exploring new ways of doing things, sharing learned lessons and finding common standards. COP is significant because it supports people to find value in interacting with each other, driven by the need to become better in what they do and therefore collaborate with others to share common issues (Stoll et al., 2007; Stuckey and Smith, 2004; Zboralski and Georg, 2006; Hughes et al., 2007; Buckley and Du Toit, 2010).

Criticism has also been voiced against CPD and is explained in the following section.

#### **2.6.4 Criticism of CPD**

Continuing professional development is believed to equip trainers with necessary knowledge and skills, with an aim of implementing needed changes. Even so, a contradiction is seen in a study conducted by Hustler et al. (2003:viii) on 'Teachers Perception of CPD'. This study indicated that teachers could have gained and

benefitted more from CPD, however, there were issues raised concerning the effectiveness of planned programmes. The disadvantages were associated with a 'one-size fit all standardised CPD', and failure to take accounts of teachers existing knowledge, experience and needs. Similarly, Fullan (2001), Guskey (2002) and Darling-Hammond (2010) identified reasons why CPD may fail: 1) Failure to consider factors that motivate teachers to attend, 2) Lack of planned follow- ups, and 3) Fragmented and unfocused CPD, which is unconnected to classroom experiences.

On the other hand, Day (1999) supports professional development, but he is also critical of the fact that the impact of CPD may be based on teachers' self-reports of their experience rather than the outcome. I find this quite justified, because it would be important to know whether CPD sessions were successful, and what impact they may have had on pupils' learning outcomes. The same view is acknowledged, by Bolam and Weindling (2006) who also point out that CPD can no longer be seen exclusively as attendance at short workshops. This should be linked to sustainable and continuous engagement of trainers, and being able to reflect on practice, and speak to one another. The arguments presented are based on the fact that teachers are facing new challenges and increased expectations of students' performances, which seem to be a valid reason. There is need for institutions to strengthen and improve educational practice and use new methods of CPD that support teachers' learning and teaching methods (Day, 1999; Darling-Hammond, 2009; Hustler et al., 2003).

What clearly emerges from Day's (1999) close work with teachers is that he advocated for well-planned, structured and relevant CPD, with opportunities for active learning and also expertise evaluations. While Guskey (2002) went further and designed 'A model of Teacher Change' which demonstrated the order of change

processes as they occur and how specific change may be facilitated and sustained. What lacks in his research is the evidence to illustrate the kind of noted changes in teachers, resulting from professional development. It can be argued that the model sounds too simplistic especially in the case of trainers of long-term unemployed learners or learners with learning difficulties. The extent to which such situations may change is difficult to predict and sometimes improvements may not be realised that soon and doubts may be cast on the students' capabilities and the teacher's efficacy. Furthermore, Day's (1999) advantage like Pratt (2005) is that he clearly presents several strategies that teachers could chose from to suit their contextual needs in a constructive way. He insists that the quality of teaching clearly depends on teachers continuing to learn, however, it is essential to consider the teachers' nature of work and working environment.

Other suggestions for CPD that appeared in the literature that I read were:

- Self-study, online modules, weekend sessions, afternoon study, day-long teaching and learning, and group discussion modules
- Trainer networking
- Partnership with other institutions
- Mentoring
- Resources: library, online resources, institutional resources
- Incentives

In conclusion, there is need for well-planned and long-term learning programme that will lead to sustainability in professional development in terms of regular feedback and follow-ups. It is also essential to state the purpose of CPD and what it intends to

achieve in order to improve the trainers' teaching quality that may have an impact on unemployed adult learners in a rapid changing labour market.

The following section on development of questions illustrates how the literature that I read became data for the Grounded Theory approach.

## 2.7 Development of research questions

During the research process, the research questions developed and led to a focused research problem that helped me cover the issues in depth. The secondary and primary sources of data found and read, led me to discover what I was looking for. See table 2.1 for illustrations.

**Table 2.1** Development of the research questions

Table 2.1 is a description of the research questions and points of influence, which includes literature, discussions and observations, interview data, personal experience and educational background.

What are the adult learners and adult trainers' perception of adult education in New Star Vocational College?	Drawn from literature, aim to enhance unemployed learners learning outcomes and to understand the difficulties the trainers undergo. Lassnigg (2012), Frisenbachler and Hackl (2014), and Schneeberger (2006) argued that adult education in Austria is an area that is full of contradiction and difficult to understand because of the
---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

	<p>inconsistencies of policy issues, and the many providers with different goals coupled with lack of transparency.</p>
<p>How do adult learners and adult trainers perceive teaching quality in New Star Vocational College?</p>	<p>Literature was used to shape the initial question, my philosophical standpoint, (OECD, 2003; Hemmer, 2014; Looney, 2011). Personal experience and educational background coupled with a deeper understanding of better professional practice from my Masters degree in education.</p> <p>Through critical reflection after analysing the initial data, I looked for the interconnectivity between the different pieces of what had emerged and the theoretical framework that had informed my study.</p>
<p>3. How can trainers be helped to enhance their professional skills to teach unemployed adult learners in Austria?</p>	<p>Partial understanding of the dilemmas of trainers, sympathy for unemployed learners, passion for improvement, values, and relevance of the study data from first phase of data collection.</p> <p>From interpretations, discussion from emerging data and search for a structural</p>



	form for my thesis
--	--------------------

## Conclusion

This chapter has focused on the literature review that has laid out some of the foundations for the study. The literature on policy and adult education, and theories of adult learning show that interest is growing although there are still ambiguities in the definition of adult education, which exist in different ways. It is essential that the theories of adult learning be understood within the context of unemployed learners and trainers. The importance of improving trainer and teaching quality has appeared in the literature, which is seen in the discussion, enabling the trainer to develop professional skills through continuing professional development. The CPD literature has also demonstrated its weaknesses but by building communities of practice and creating opportunities for the trainers are some of the strong arguments for implementing it.

Chapter 3 will build on the conceptual framework and introduce the research methods and methodology, and show how the processes were selected.

## **Chapter 3**

### **3 Methods and methodology**

#### **3.1 Introduction**

Chapter 3 will describe and provide justification for the methods and methodology approach used in this study to answer questions that arose from my practice and those that emerged as described in chapter 2. The next section will focus on the pilot study that informed the main study and then section 3.3 discusses my philosophical position and the reasons for adopting an interpretive paradigm for this study. Within this framework, the role of the researcher is significant as well as that of the participants. Other sections discuss matters of ethical consideration, researcher's bias and issues of differential power.

During the literature review, the search revealed an under-researched area and this steered me to the approach and design of this research. A case study approach may generate multiple sources of data, as was the situation in New Star Vocational College, the list of sources is made up of; recordings of interviews, open-ended questionnaires, minutes from meetings, research diaries, students' evaluation feedback forms, and policy documents. An examination of the sources resulted in practical implications of my research strategy.

The methods of analysis are discussed from the analytical framework of Glaser and Strauss (1967) and Charmaz (2006) in the context of the study of trainers in Austria. Other issues discussed are sources of potential bias in relationship with the identified methods and planned strategies to reduce bias, and aspects of using two languages to collect data.

### **3.2 Pilot study**

Pilot studies, are regarded as useful and valuable tools by researchers. Cohen et al. (2007) illustrate how piloting is an effective framework for planning research. It fulfils a range of essential roles and provides invaluable information for the main study. For example, in implementing research processes, technical issues in the design are looked at as well as developing and testing the suitability of the research instruments, and also checking the adequacy of data analysis procedures. Piloting the data collection and analysis, gives the researcher the opportunity to make necessary amendments of the proposed research methods, and to take appropriate action to refine the research questions and methodology before the main study (Burgess et al., 2006).

Therefore, a small pilot study was undertaken, the research site involved two trainers, one project coordinator and two learners. The participants were not the same as those of the main study apart from one key informant who proved to be very valuable for the study. The interviewing time schedule was similar to the main study but the research questions became more focused and changed as questions developed along the issues that emerged from the initial data analysis. These aspects were necessary in understanding the needs of unemployed learners and trainers in improving teaching and learning. The questions focused on the perspectives of the trainers, learners and managers within the broad themes in the pilot study, (questions for trainers, project coordinators and learners).

#### **3.2.1 Implications of the pilot study on methods and data collection**

The pilot study provided the following useful insight on the modifications to be

made for the main study, in particular;

- Write the questionnaire and interview items in both German and English
- Allow participants to decide on the language to be interviewed in
- Explain purpose of recording at the start of the interview
- Include a third person in the translation processes
- Widen the scope of trainer samples to include those who had left the institution

The early stages of data and the iterative nature of coding (Charmaz, 2006) enabled the study to produce an emergent framework that illuminated trainer challenges, learner difficulties and managerial limitations, which supported my understanding and development of explanations of the research problem. Criticism of GT will be addressed in section 3.11.2. However, contextual practices and policies of trainer employment, programming of the courses and other inconsistencies enabled me to amend my decisions and to build on the data.

Ethical considerations were observed and data analysis and interpretations allowed me to have time to make improvements and to modify the interview schedule as well as construct learner questionnaires, which shed light on inconclusive or unclear issues. Dey (1999:24) suggests that ‘to do research requires reflection on what we are doing and how we do it’.

Using semi-structured interviews, the sub-questions were investigated and the data was recorded with the agreement of the respondents. Originally, the learners’ and the

managers' interviews were to be conducted in German. However, this seemed to change depending on the participants' need to communicate clearly in a language they were comfortable with (English or German). So, the researcher had to be flexible for that matter. A good example is during consultation with the project coordinator to hand over the interview questions for preparation. She requested to have the interview done in the English language; therefore I prepared the schedule in English for her. Unexpectedly, on the interview day, she preferred to respond in German due to the urge to speak clearly and to organise her line of thought more easily. The interview was carried forward using two languages. The reason not to postpone was based on the uncertainty of the duration of the project and availability of the participant.

Initially, the fourth interviewee had agreed to be recorded but withdrew that consent but accepted to have notes written at the end of the interview. I respected the decision; unfortunately, the reasons for not being recorded were not followed up because of the nature of the timetable structure and availability of the learner. After the notes were written, I sent a copy to the interviewee to validate what had been written. A few changes were made because of the German word 'bekommen' and the English word 'become', these words are referred to as false friends. Therefore, for the main study, I had the interviews and the open-ended questionnaires written in both languages to fit the needs of the respondents.

The findings from the pilot study guided the development of the learners' questionnaires and semi-structured interviews for the main study's phases of data collection, by focusing on relevant questions that would yield rich data (Geertz, 1973). The revised questions were re-issued to the key informant who controlled

them for ambiguity in German. The open-ended questionnaire was piloted on two learners just before the main study commenced due to learner unavailability. It was easily completed and a few modifications were made. It revealed that some questions were vague and had caused misunderstandings. The questions were changed and again piloted on other learners and the analysis proved to yield clear and reliable information.

Other decision made is that the translation processes would include a third person who is a linguist to help increase the validity and reliability of the study. The decision was based on my experience of collaborating with an experienced colleague because I had found it difficult to identify with her choice of words and therefore had suffered a kind of detachment from my research.

Other factors like contextual aspect would be widened to include trainers who had been in the institution but had left for other colleges. This was to link the trainers' needs to the development of the New Star Vocational College and to help me gain an insight into the perception of trainer practice, which could then be compared to the policy document guidelines (2013, 2014) during analysis. Yin (2009:92) in case study literature suggests that a pilot study can enable one to make a conceptual clarification for the research design and review of relevant literature, which are aspects that I utilised to give clarity to the study.

The following section will focus on research paradigm, approaches and design.

### **3.3 Research paradigm, approaches and design**

In this section, I have outlined the main research paradigms and the reasons for adopting a broadly 'interpretive/constructive' stance, the rationale for employing the

qualitative approach and case study design within Grounded Theory. My position and the choices that I made are explained concerning the instruments of data collection and analysis.

### **3.3.1 Interpretive/constructive stance**

There are several paradigms in which educational research can be conducted. Burgess et al. (2006:54) stated that,

A paradigm presents a world-view that defines for its holder the nature of the 'world', the individual's place in it, and the range of possible relationships in that world.

Paradigms are set of beliefs, which help us to understand the nature of phenomena and our view of reality (Cohen et al., 2007). Creswell (2007) argues that our choice of a philosophical stance has implications for the researcher in the design and conduct of research. He further states, it is important to make explicit the paradigm that will influence the conduct of research. Therefore, in trying to comprehend the world, opposing views have led to 'paradigm wars' (Hammersley et al., 2007), which differ considerably in making claim for knowledge. Among them are the positivists who assume that the world out there is an ordered and structured place with universal laws that depend on scientific facts that are objectively seen, and empirically tested including human nature (Cohen et al., 2007). For data collection and analysis, they insist on well-constructed theories that follow systematic procedures. A tested sample at a given period can be applied to a wider population and produce similar results when replicated. A key criticism of the positivist is the claim for ideal and absolute knowledge of the reality. Likewise, Habermas (1972, 1974) criticised the positivists for failing to take account of the unique human nature. Later on, Cohen et al. (2007) pointed out how they have been less successful in

studying the complex nature of behaviour and social quality, especially in education.

The other alternative was the post-positivists who support 'scientific objectivity' but recognise flaws in society. In conducting research a combination of qualitative and quantitative methods are employed. Further, the post-positivists see shortcomings of knowledge but are able to come to terms with some possibility of truth in certain claims (Burgess et al., 2006; Cohen et al., 2007). On the other hand, post-modernism paradigm focus is changing on ways of thinking, and insists that knowledge should be set within today's social reality that is all-inclusive in terms of gender, race and class argues Creswell (2007). They show the importance of situational narratives as opposed to set theories.

After considering the strengths and weaknesses of different paradigms, I adopted a combination of the interpretive/constructivist paradigm, because of the nature of research questions that aim to discover the complex multiple perspectives of the phenomena and how they are constructed. Burgess et al. (2006:55) argue 'there are no absolutes, but all phenomena can be studied and interpreted in different ways'. Ontologically, there is no universal objective truth rather reality is a collection of subjective interpretations by its participants (Bassey, 1999; Cage, 2003; Rossman and Rallis, 2003). Epistemologically, people create their own knowledge through learning, which fundamentally is a subjective activity (Hodkinson and MacLeod, 2010). More importantly, the research method aims to discover peoples' subjective interpretation of knowledge and the reality that they have constructed.

The need here is to understand the participants rather than to measure and then categorise or vice-versa. It is essential to see the world through their eyes and to



expect that the participants' interpretations of the same situation may differ in response (Cage, 1989). Therefore, emphasis is put on representation of different interpretations in details and in a naturalistic setting, which fits with the qualitative methodology. This gives room for individual accounts and constructions of reality (Denzin, 1989). This worldview has provided me with the rationale and lens to select the methodology, methods of data collection and analysis.

After analysing the findings, I felt that the critical stance (Creswell, 2007) would have been adopted to challenge the socio-political status quo and to provide a voice to the 'disadvantaged' unemployed learners about learning inequalities and learning disabilities, hence promoting social justice for this cohort of learners. On the other hand, the aim of the study was not to expose the 'imbalances' but to improve and develop professional skills for the trainers.

The next section explains the reason for selecting the qualitative methodology.

### **3.4 Qualitative research**

This study is set within the framework of a qualitative study that entails a case study within Grounded Theory for data collection and analysis. It involved a mixture of the following research methods: interviews, questionnaires and documents. Denzin and Lincoln (1994) defined qualitative methodology as multi-method in focus, involving an interpretive, naturalistic approach to its subject matter. It allows for multiple perspectives and judgement in contrast to quantitative methodology, which does not respond to unstructured and subjective explanations. Burgess et al. (2006:57) argue that 'multiplicity is best understood as a strategy that adds rigour, breadth and depth to the overall research design'.

I chose the approach because I felt that it would enable me to answer my research questions in this particular context. Creswell (1994) argued that the qualitative approach has the ability to explore social and human problems. The aim of my study was to understand the complicated issues in the trainers' everyday life, and to explore factors that can promote the quality of teaching that seem impossible for the scientific approach (Maykut and Morehouse, 2005; Sliverman, 2005).

The qualitative methodology allows for data to be collected from the natural setting in the actual words of the respondents which is contextually relevant and 'fit' for purpose Schofield (2007:199). It allows for emerging features and the follow up of leads, which are consistent with the methods of data collection and analysis.

Merriam (1998:5) acknowledges that 'the product of qualitative inquiry is rich descriptive' or 'thick descriptions' as suggested by Geertz (1973:312). These descriptions include the context, quotations from the participants, field notes, documents, interviews, participants, phenomena, and questionnaires as sources of evidence. Even though there are differences in the traditions among the type of qualitative research. Most researchers agree (Patton, 1990; Creswell, 1998, 2007; Merriam, 1998; Denzin and Lincoln, 2000; Cohen et al., 2007) that qualitative research aims to understand the phenomena from the participants' perspective. These traditions or orientations all share common aspects but differ in focus.

- Phenomenology - Focuses on structure of experience (Van Manen, 1990; Moustaks, 1994).

- Grounded theory - Aims at building theory and discovering, data is analysed in tandem with data collection (Glaser and Strauss, 1967; Strauss and Corbin, 1990; Charmaz, 2006).
- Case study - Intensive description/analysis of phenomena. The advantage is that other types of studies can be or are sometimes combined with case study. Or even build Grounded Theory within a case study (Stakes, 1995; Yin, 2003).
- Narratives - Use of stories as data (Denzin, 1989; Clandinin and Conoley, 2000).
- Ethnography - Seeks to understand how people make sense of their everyday life (Geertz, 1973; Cohen et al., 2007; Hammersley and Atkinson, 2007).

The above researchers all agree that in this type of research, the researcher is more concerned with gathering data to build concepts or theories rather than testing a hypothesis. This fits with my case study that combines Glaser and Strauss (1967) Grounded Theory and Charmaz (2006) to build theory.

The next section explains dilemmas in qualitative research.

### **3.4.1 Dilemmas in qualitative research**

Positivists criticise the qualitative researcher's deep involvement in the natural setting connected to the 'rapport' developed between researcher and participants, they claim that this can lead to subjective interpretations of meaning. Consequently, making data inaccurate by portraying distorted presentations, scientifically seen as a

source of error (Cohen et al., 2007; Hammersley et al., 2007). It can be argued that the positivists are concerned about the lack of objectivity and statistical data in qualitative research, and therefore insist that it is a risk to generalise the results. However, Schofield (2007) argues that theoretical analytical generalisation can be made where a similar situation occurs.

Another argument presented is about bias and lack of internal validity but Smith (2000) and Plowright (2012) insist that there are possibilities to control for bias through:

- Respondent validation
- Using triangulation
- Peer/critical friend
- Presenting data in respondents' words
- Ensuring that the context is representative (context-bound)
- Self-reflection in a form of research diary or journal
- Being honest in documenting and reporting

The qualitative research therefore offered me advantages: 1) To address trainer quality in my setting better than quantitative research, 2) An opportunity to clarify to the respondents of any difficulties and misunderstandings, 3) The possibility to rephrase the questions for better understanding, and 4) To look at how words are used in the setting to fit the context. When I looked at the advantages and disadvantages of the qualitative methodology, I was able to make an informed decision and therefore chose this approach as the most suitable and relevant that fulfilled the criteria and aims of my study. I was concerned about this specific setting and

therefore interested in context-specific solutions that are applicable to trainers of this vocational college.

The following section outlines the justifications for the research design.

### **3.5 Research design**

There are diverse research approaches to educational research. However, I chose case study as the most appropriate because I was interested in the contextual factors surrounding my study.

#### **3. 5.1 Case study and issues of generalisability**

After considering the advantages and disadvantages of the above approaches, I chose case study because it allowed an in-depth investigation into the perception of the trainers, learners and managers within the context of learning and teaching. This was a small-scale study in a vocational college in Austria.

A case study can involve a single entity; a person or classroom or group, a large-scale community but can also include multiple entities (Cohen et al., 2007; Stake, 1998; Yin, 2003). The aim was to gain an insight into the daily practice of trainers and to find ways in which to improve their professional skills. Case studies are valuable because they allow events to unfold intensely thus leading to rich vivid descriptions of events that are relevant to the case.

Yin (1984:23) explains that case studies allow the investigation of ‘contemporary phenomena within in a real context; when the boundaries between the phenomenon and context are not clearly evident’, the phenomenon is not excluded from the context as happens in the scientific procedures but is analysed in connection with the influences of the context. According to Cohen et al. (2007:181) the paradigm that is

suitable for a case study is the interpretative paradigm because 'it seeks to understand the world in terms of the actors and consequently maybe described as interpretive and subjective'. This fits with my philosophical perspective that emphasises the subjective interpretations of meaning. This is also suggested by Stake (1995) who claims that a crucial factor in case study is revealing the meaning of the phenomenon for the participants because knowledge is contextual and interpreted through the readers' experience. Similarly, Cohen et al. (2007:272) indicate that 'a case study can penetrate situations in a way that are not susceptible to numerical analyses'. It often builds on tacit knowledge by providing thick descriptions of the case under study, because it has the ability to deal with a variety of evidence obtained from documents, observations and interviews (Merriam, 1998).

Another advantage of using a case study is its ability to answer the 'why' and 'how' questions, which are suitable for my research because of its flexibility and adaptable nature. It also highlights the researcher as an active participant through reflexivity, matching patterns and comparing explanations (Butcher, 2013).

Critique of case study has focused on the grounds of being non-representative and for lacking statistical generalisation (Burgess et al., 2006). Another argument is that data is open to various interpretations, and there is a potential for the researcher to be biased. Moreover, other researchers argue that there is the possibility to generalise results in the sense of relevance of findings (Gomm et al., 2002 cited in Burgess et al., 2006). Even so, contrasting opinion on how generalisations can be done, is seen in Denzin and Lincoln (2007:193) who argue that a case study can be generalised 'by looking at multiple actors in multiple settings which could enhance generalisability' this claim only focuses on large numbers. My case is small scale but

Yin (2009:15) like Schofield (2007) argues that ‘ a case study will be able to expand and generalise theories (analytical generalisations) and not to enumerate frequencies (statistical generalisations)’. I am not after producing statistical generalisations nor replications but theoretical generalisations that could be useful to other similar situations (Schofield 2007). Hence, Stake (1994:86) emphasised the need to design the study to optimise understanding of the case rather than looking at generalisations beyond the case.

Case study is an appropriate design because it has the ability to reveal in detail the unique perception of the participants (a holistic approach) involving the institution. In carrying out my research in New Star Vocational College, the case study allowed me to stay within the boundaries of my study and to gain access to the research participants. The case study relied on multiple sources of data such as interviews, documents and questionnaires. The evidence found suggests Burgess et al. (2006:60) needs to be ‘woven into a narrative account, presenting the chain of evidence of different kinds’.

The following section will discuss the role of the researcher.

### **3.6 Role of researcher**

It is essential that researchers clarify their roles especially in using qualitative methods so as to make the research credible. In this case study, the researcher took up many roles, ranging from ‘insider’- belonging to the group and ‘outsider’ - complete stranger, (Adler and Adler, 1994; Hellawell, 2007). The researcher was an instrument of data collection, which made it difficult to remain impartial. It was important to understand the role of the researcher and researched relationship in this

study. There were two dimensions ‘classifying’ the researcher’s identity compared to that of the participants and ‘positioning’ the researcher’s role.

The researcher’s cultural identity, is viewed in the sense of belonging to a certain culture linked to internationalised social structures, language, religion, traditions, education and thinking patterns (Lustig, 2013). Although the study is set in Austria, I investigated the case study by looking at multicultural participants of different nationalities. Issues of race and potential power imbalance had to be addressed (Hellawell, 2007). It would be difficult to assume that ‘placing’ the researcher’s identity against that of the participants had no impact on the study. Or to imagine that only the participants’ cultural background could have an influence on the research without considering the researcher’s cultural background. Hellawell (2007) and Mercer (2007) argue that it is important to address these issues.

Being a ‘non-white’ woman interviewing ‘whites’ had some bearing on the study and I was positioned in the ‘outsider’ position as an African. I felt the complicated ‘positioning’ and in some cases the participants responded to my ‘Africanness’, and in other interviews they referred to ‘other’ non-native speakers of English, in which case they granted me an insider status. I will refer to one interaction where I got the feeling that at times the researcher had become the researched. This example demonstrates the ‘outsider’ positioning.

Solare: So you are an African researching in Austria?

Research: Yes. I am from Kenya but have lived in this country for 20 years.

Solare: Why are you doing research in Austria and what do you hope to gain?



Researcher: I am researching here because I work with adult learners who are in the process of re-entering the labour market. My interest is to improve trainer practice so that it can have an impact on them.

Solare: Don't you expect to return to your country?

Researcher: Maybe when the children are grown up and I have retired but it all depends on my family.

Being a black woman raised questions of disbelief and curiosity but at the same time based on the perception of unawareness and lack of interest. This was obvious in the classroom because the majority of the learners had little geographical knowledge and those who did, spoke from a touristic point of view; about exotic life, cultural richness in terms of song and dance, simplicity etc. In most of the lessons, I had observed that there was a desire to find out about my country and also to listen to stories.

On the other hand, I am not sure whether 'matching by colour'- insider classification had any influence on the rich data that I received from Leroy 15, an interviewee of black American origin. It was the most detailed and quite informative interview based on issues of trainer challenges, learner difficulties and suggestions for professional development. During data selection, I quoted some long extracts from his interviews because they were well expressed and allowed a clear demonstration of what was happening in NSVC. My role was not to go after 'racial' prejudice; my commitment was to collect rich data. Secondly, the use of 'we', 'us' in the interviewees' conversation depicted their inclusion criteria and positioning the researcher as an 'insider', Sylvia 11 talked of, 'we can change the managerial structure, ....we only have 'crumbs' for products to sell'.

The dilemma I experienced was to balance the insider role and that of a trainer. My role as a trainer differed from that of being a researcher. Mercer (2007) argues that there are advantages and disadvantages of having both roles. The insider role made me feel accepted and gave me access to knowledge on many issues that were happening in NSVC. In addition to being an insider, I had spontaneous conversations with my colleagues, which enriched the data. Some of my colleagues showed a commitment and willingness to come to my house for interviews during the period I had a knee injury and even later on to sit in a coffee house to discuss issues on my study (Researcher's Diary, 2015). Knowing the participants' personality also facilitated the interactions between us but also enabled me to understand the situation and circumstances of some trainers who had rejected being interviewed. This was connected to fear, and the nature of the job contract so I did not need clarification.

On one hand, the majority viewed the study as a platform to air their unspoken difficulties but on the other hand, a few had negative perceptions of the management processes. I do not want to sound prejudiced but these few were unfortunately men who did not take part in my study. I felt that my role as a female researcher had been challenged but I relied on my strong personality and self-confidence built on years of living in a foreign country trying to master daily dilemmas associated with being a black woman. My theoretical framework 'interpretivist/constructivist' helped me deal with this issue because people see the world differently, and also interpret it differently. Perhaps most trainers recognised that they could benefit in a way, because it provided them with a means to improve their skills in tackling the

challenges that faced them. Their perception of me as a researcher seemed to be acceptable after listening to the rationale of the study and set goals.

The disadvantage of being an ‘insider’ was linked to the assumption of knowing participants’ stand on certain issues regarding the employer especially at the time when the majority were made redundant. In order to carry out a credible insider-research I addressed the disadvantages by being conscious of the ‘perceived bias’ on data collection and analysis, and ethical issues concerning anonymity (BERA, 2004).

The impact of the researcher on the researched was captured on the complexity and problematic dimensions of ‘distance’ and ‘closeness’ (Becker, 2000). Distance was felt when interacting with learners and managers, and closeness with trainers. Distance meant that they felt ‘safer’ talking to ‘an outsider’, and could therefore control what they had to say. On the other hand, they were able to explain and clarify issues based on the assumptions that I did not know or understand what was happening in New Star Vocational College, for example Thomas 4 an interviewee enlightened me on the inception of the company and trainer policy issues.

The second experience of distance was observed by the reaction received from unemployed learners in my position as a trainer. I realised that at the beginning of every course, they were sceptical about being taught by a black woman of African origin; they struggled with accepting me. After 2 or 3 days, they felt relaxed because they appreciated the fact that I treated them with a lot of understanding, paid attention to each learner with difficulties, and even took extra time to assist those who were shy and had issues. Once we built trust, I was able to understand their

reasons attributed to cultural shock or being filled with fear of having their personal 'baggage' exposed. They were honest to say that they did not regret sitting in my classes, and at the end of the course I always got a present as a sign of appreciation for my effort, patience and tolerance. Through the study, I am now able to explain some of the behaviour in a manner that makes sense rather than just based on first impressions.

In my role as a researcher, the participants reacted with mixed feelings and were reserved about taking part in the research, not because I was not capable or competent. Their interpretation and reaction to me was that of a spy for the Public Employment Service, they were afraid to lose their unemployment benefits. I had to deal with their reactions and my own too by explaining to them clearly. Therefore, I translated the informed consent into German for their understanding, and to erase any doubts that they may have had about me as a person, trainer and researcher.

It was different with the managers. I recognised that there was an imbalance of power (Hellowell, 2007). It was important that I consider their busy schedules and demands, and the extent to which I could get their involvement. It was impossible to interview the top management even though they found the study useful. The managers down the line that I interviewed were part of New Star Vocational College and valued the research. This was linked to the fact that they had to deal with unemployed learners who were considered very difficult, and also trainer mobility. The institution had very many courses, which were poorly structured and seemed to demonstrate lack of strategic planning. It left the managers on site overworked, which was challenging to their personal values. I was able to get enough support

during my period as a trainer and even after leaving the institution. The only uncomfortable issue was the demand to know everything I did in my study. I knew this was to guard against any weaknesses being exposed; Ladd and Zelli (2002) and Taylor, Neu and Peters (2002) argue in the principal-agent model that we always calculate and assess what will suit our personal goals. The reaction is based on what Hales (1997) quoted in (Harris et al., 1997:28-29) referred to as 'calculative compliance'. Therefore, I decided to choose what to expose because I had guaranteed to protect the participants' privacy and anonymity (BERA, 2004; Burgess et al, 2006).

The following part explains why it was necessary to keep a diary, and then I will explain how the participants were selected for the study.

### **3.6.1 Researcher's diary**

The decision to study trainers in Austria using two languages, a variety of theories, and concepts within the time span of 3 years may pose many challenges for the researcher. To validate the researcher's perspective and processes of decision-making mechanism, a hand written diary was kept to record both reflexive and reflective issues of the research processes. As Hellowell (2006) suggests it is essential to engage in self-scrutiny in the research process. The journal contains notes from diverse activities: meetings with participants, informal talk, changes made concerning interview location, references and personal challenges. It also has reflections on my inexperience in Grounded Theory and unanticipated circumstances.

### 3.7 Purposive Sampling

I did purposive sampling, which considered the unique characteristics of the research participants in the setting. The developed sampling criteria for selecting participants, involved those capable of answering the research questions. I also considered experience of teaching unemployed adult learners. Patton (1990) referred to these as information rich-cases because they bear information that is central to the study. Plowright (2012) suggested that purposive sampling is a kind of non-probability sample, which is based on the researcher's judgement in terms of size and purpose of the research. This type of sampling does not aim to generalize or to be representative but aims at credibility, by maximizing to the full the advantages of in-depth purposeful sampling

Although Patton (1990:169) identified sixteen types of purposive sampling, the study employed the following sampling strategies:

- 1) Maximum variation - Purposefully selecting and targeting a wide range of variation of dimensions of interest.
- 2) Snowball or chain sampling enabled me to identify cases of interest from participants who knew people who had information concerning the study. This type of sampling led to good interview participants who enriched data for the study.
- 3) Opportunistic sampling was important for following new leads during fieldwork and taking advantage of the unexpected.

A combination of these purposeful sampling was important for triangulation; this was flexible enough to accommodate many necessary sampling interests.

The participants were trainers, adult learners and managers from NSVC. At NSVC, all the participants were given the option to participate in the study. I involved those who had interest in the study subject but also contemplated on the fact that they had information to contribute. I aimed at including people within a broad range of experiences, for example: English native speakers and non-native speakers, trainers teaching both English and German, and those with a lot of experience in teaching unemployed learners and those new to adult education.

The research participants of the main study were 32 in total, (22) females and (10) males, aged between 30-60 years old. The examples demonstrate the diversity of the research participants in terms of age, gender and qualifications. See table 3.1. It reflects some of the rationale for carrying out the research. Below are characteristics of the participants.

**Table 3.1** Characteristics of participants (trainers and managers)

Participants number	Sex	Years of experience		Qualifications	
18 trainers	F 15	0-6 years	6	CELTA	2
2 managers	M 5	6-10 years	5	First degree	10
		11-20 years	8	Second degree	8
		Over 20 years	1		

### **3.7.1 Profile of trainers**

18 trainers were interviewed; the sample of trainers had a similarity with the learners' sample because the females were more than the males. In this sample, 5 male trainers and 15 female trainers were interviewed. The sample was not intentionally split for gender reasons; it was based on the fact that they held useful information and experience relevant for the study.

### **3.7.2 Profile of the project co-ordinator**

I interviewed the project co-ordinator who is in-charge of management in NSVC institution, and whose work contributes to the development of the courses, recruitment of trainers and administrative duties, monitoring the students' progress, communicating with partners involved in the project, and implementing policies that impact on unemployed adult learners' education.

### **3.7.3 Profile of adult learners**

Generally, adult learners are people who have been in full-time employment or part-time employment, people with a career break, older people, and persons undergoing rehabilitations to find work. The institution aims to provide courses that would enable them to re-join the job market to find permanent work. The following programmes are given priority: career guidance, job coaching, and initiative for long-term unemployed people, IT and language training. The level of formal education is different as well as the background. Classes are held from Monday to Friday but the numbers of hours depend on type of courses that range from two to eight hours. The courses run between 4 weeks to 3 months. For example, at the end



of the English language course there is an international examination for pre-intermediate to advanced level whereby the learners hope to use this qualification to find employment.

**Table 3.2** Learners' samples and questionnaire response rate

Participants Total number	Age band	Sex	Austrian/Migrant	Questionnaire response rate
12	30-60	7 Females 5 Males	8 Migrants 4 Austrians	12

12 students including 5 males and 7 females completed the questionnaires. The sample included 8 migrants and 4 Austrians who were between ages 30-60. The majority of adult learners were registered for English and Accounting courses in the unemployment programs. Only 2 learners in the sample were reported to have had no other school education apart from the program they were currently pursuing. Comparably, a small number reported to have done high school level qualifications 'Matura' which is equivalent to (A level). The majority had completed apprenticeship courses. Ultimately, the institution supports adult learners who want to upgrade their qualification so as to improve their employment chance. The labour market encourages learners to start with the qualifications and experiences they have, and then gradually advance towards useful qualifications.

Altogether, this small sample contributed to the discussion because all the learners were in the institution.

#### 3.7.4 Role of key informant

The key informant became important in the study because she put me in touch with others participants who had information, this was as a result of the knee injury I had suffered at the end of year one, after the pilot study. During that period of my extensive sick leave and loss of work, some of the participants were hard-to-reach. It became difficult for me to have direct access to them, and through her efforts I was able to establish contact with those made redundant. The other reason for engaging her was because she had been in NSVC the longest compared to other participants, and had also expert knowledge (Bernard, 1995; Marshall, 1996) on relevant aspects of the study: unemployment issues, recruitment and selection of trainers, enrolment of learners, relationship of the provider and the public employment service.

I was able to secure cooperation through trust established in our work as trainers. The key informant portrayed a willingness to be involved in my research whenever she had time. As a result, we established mutual respect, which was important for the period of time of the research. From the onset, I explained my motivation for the research, ethical issues of anonymity, data recording strategies and storage. This was necessary as she was a link person in networking with learners too, and supported me in distributing open-ended questionnaires following the laid down instructions and ethical considerations. Documents for the study (NSVC policy, 2013 and 2014) were accessed on my behalf from the management through her help and brought to my house.

My relationship with the informant intensified during the translation processes as we

collaborated in discussing issues of conceptual equivalences, grammar and linguistic rules in English and German. The challenges of translation became manageable because she was a bilingual teacher, although I was aware of ethical and epistemological challenges as explained in (section 3.15 translation in process).

Other considerations for the informant's role included her good background of social-cultural knowledge of the context because of her long experience in working with unemployed learners, and also having lived many years in Austria. In writing the questionnaire items in German, I was able to consult her to check the use of language and cultural norms. Cohen et al. (2007) and Burgess (1989) warn that issues of informant bias during interactional encounters should not be ignored or taken for granted. Bias should be examined in terms of misinformation, attitude, behaviour, communication, and location. The following strategies were used to monitor bias, 1) Counter-checking with other participants, 2) Consulting institutional documents, and 3) Reflecting and interacting with the researcher's diary.

### **3.7.5 Role of critical friend**

The 'critical friend' identified for the study was an external 'supporter' whose role was that of facilitating the progress of the research by providing reflective and learning capacity for the trainer-researcher in a thoughtful, critiquing, and cooperative manner (Stenhouse, 1975). Further, constructive feedback and genuine advice challenged my own beliefs and professional knowledge but also encouraged me to think critically about my study (Holden, 1997). It was an opportunity to clarify some of the issues and responses on my research, and to gain better insight into what I was doing.

The supportive role became obvious during the unexpected period of my knee injury and redundancies; the ‘critical friend’ enabled me to look at these circumstances as valuable lessons rather than sympathetic state of affairs. These reflective opportunities allowed me to have clearer ideas of my work, for example at the beginning of Year 2 my ‘critical friend’ recommended that I look at the initial interview data again and concentrate on issues that needed attention. This interaction guided me in maintaining autonomy in constructing the research related to trainer practice in adult learning.

In addition, my ‘critical friend’ played a knowledgeable and advisory role; during the period I was writing the thesis, I allowed various sections that I had written to be read and criticized. What emerged was constructive and valid criticism, which enabled me to do effective revisions. This was possible because of the established rapport and efforts put in our face-to-face sessions. I was able to talk about concepts, theories and actions, and to reflect on my progress as well as challenges, dilemmas and solutions based on my intellectual experiences and professional knowledge. On the other hand, I was aware of time constraints and my own reactions towards criticism.

The following sections explain the methods used to gather data.

### **3.8 Methods used**

The purpose of this study was to understand how trainers could be helped to improve teaching quality for unemployed learners. The methods used will be described as follows:

- (a) Semi-structured interviews, (b) Open-ended questionnaires, and (c)

Documents.

### **3.8.1 Semi-structured interviews**

An interview is a tool for gathering data. Kvale (1996:14) suggested that ‘an interview is an interchange of views between two or more people on a topic of mutual interest’. The advantage is that it may generate detailed data that is first hand, and also allow the use of verbal and non-verbal aspects during an interview session (Creswell, 2007). However, Hammersley et al. (2007) caution about ‘reactivity effect’ and issues of power balance in the interviewer-interviewee relationship that may have an influence on the research.

Patton (1980:206) outlined four types of interviews: informal conversational interviews, interview guided approaches, standardised open-ended interviews and closed quantitative interviews. From the wide range of interview strategies, I chose to use semi-structured interviews:

- To capture the uniqueness of the context
- Enable the participants to talk freely about their interpretations of social reality
- Discuss about their views of the world from their own perspective.

As opposed to structured interviews whose content is organised and the interview schedule is fixed, there is also less freedom for the participants in answering questions or even for the researcher to make adjustments (Cohen et al., 2007; Burgess et al., 2006; Kvale, 1996).

The following table 3.3 shows the periods when data was collected.

**Table 3.3** Periods of data collection

Interviews (1-4)	Pilot study	13 <sup>th</sup> October 2013 to April 2014
Interviews (1-7), New Star Vocational College policy (2013), student evaluation forms, questionnaires	Phase 1	16 <sup>th</sup> October 2014 to 11 <sup>th</sup> February 2015
Interviews (8-14), New Star Vocational College policy (2014), minutes of meetings	Phase 2	19 <sup>th</sup> February 2015 to 24 <sup>th</sup> March 2015
Interviews (15-20)	Phase 3	9 <sup>th</sup> July to 15 <sup>th</sup> September 2015

In the main study, the first phase of data collection included 6 trainers and 1 manager. There was a slight variation of questions in interview 4, as a result of issues that had emerged in the first 3 interviews. I therefore decided to follow clues. Interview 7 focused on management issues and the questions differed. (See appendix 2)

In the second phase, 6 trainers and 1 manager were interviewed; the interview schedule was modified based on the key issues that had emerged from data analysis, discussions and literature. In the third phase, 6 participants were interviewed, this phase mainly focused on follow-ups based on previous categories, thoughts, reflections and the literature consulted. In total 20 interviews were carried out and, out of these interviews, 9 were face-to-face, 10 E-mail and 1 telephone interview.

### **3.9 Interviewing process**

#### **3.9.1 Face-to-Face interviews**

Due to an unanticipated occurrence associated with my knee injury, the interview location was shifted to my house from the institutional setting. The interview

questions had been given out prior to the interviews to enable the participants to prepare (Cohen et al., 2007). Ethical issues were reviewed by reading out aloud the information in the consent form (see appendix 1). An interview schedule was used with all the participants for the face-to-face and telephone sessions. Cohen et al. (2007) recognised the need for an interview schedule to enable the researcher to keep a trail of the interview activity. Secondly, a guideline was used for the conduct of interviews so as to be sensitive to the interviewees' feelings.

The interviews were audio-recorded and then transcribed. Some interviews were undertaken in German and then the transcriptions were translated into English by the researcher and a colleague. A third person who is bilingual validated the translation. This was a process that took time to write and to analyse.

During interview 2 and 3, field notes were taken with the permission of the interviewees to capture the non-verbal behaviour and the after-recording discussion that revealed very useful data. Use of quotations from the after-recording discussion was negotiated with the participants.

### **3.9.2 E-mail Interviews**

E-mail interviews have benefits and challenges as argued by Miles and Huberman (1994), Kvale (1996), Strauss and Corbin (1998), Patton (2002), Denzin and Lincoln (2005), and Lokman, (2006). However, Lokman (2006:1285) argues that the following are some of the benefits of email interviews: 1) It is cost effective, 2) One can invite many participants who may be in different locations, 3) It helps to reduce the amount of time spent on transcribing, and 4) Data generated is already in an

electronic format and may therefore require less editing or formatting. On the other hand, Lokman (2006) argues that researchers have also reported delays.

The use of E-mail for conducting the semi-structured interviews became a suitable choice for a number of reasons. Firstly, due to the time schedule and limited access to the participants and secondly, most of the trainers had been made redundant as the college had experienced financial budget cuts.

I sent out individual invitations rather than listservs via e-mails, with questions and the consent form. That way I would be protecting the participants' identities according to BERA (2004), in cases where some may have used their real full names as e-mail addresses. I experienced that some participants reacted promptly like my first interviewee while others took too long to respond despite the many reminders I sent. As Hodgson (2004) quoted in Lokman (2006:1288) argues, studies show that, 'the longer it takes to complete an interview with a participant, the higher the possibility of dropouts or frustration to both the researcher and interviewee'.

For example, the second participant was identified in October of 2014; he stayed in contact through SMS, Viber and Whatsapp. Eventually, data was received just before I concluded my analyses in 2015 but it was useful because it added some important information.

### **3.9.3 Telephone Interview**

Most of the methodological literature seems to have neglected the use of telephone interviews in qualitative research. Plowright (2012:82) points out the under-use as



being attributed to ‘a relatively new application of technology to carrying out research’. In contrast, it seems to be a widespread and well-studied method for quantitative data collection, especially in carrying out surveys as argued by Aday (1996).

Telephone interviews offer a range of potential advantages in qualitative research as argued by Irvine (2010) and Creswell (2007). However, Irvine points out lack of visual cues via telephone as resulting in the loss of nonverbal and contextual data that may have implications on rapport and interpretations of data. Similarly, Creswell (2007) indicates drawbacks in terms of expenses. In contrast, Burke and Miller (2001) offer practical suggestions for conducting telephone interviews.

In planning for telephone interviewing, I got a speakerphone with good quality sound and a Dictaphone to record the interview. A few of the things I was aware of were to minimise the background noise during the recording to enable me to retrieve data as suggested by Irvine (2010) and Burke and Miller (2001) although Irvine argues that it is difficult to have insight into the participants physical setting, the unexpected can happen. (See Appendix 11 for telephone interview).

#### **3.9.4 Open-ended questionnaires**

Questionnaires are suitable methods for collecting data to enable triangulation and even analysis. There is a wide range of questionnaire types: Structured, semi-structured and unstructured (Cohen et al., 2007:320). I chose to administer the open-ended questionnaires to gain an insight into the learner’s perspective rather than structured questionnaires, which are suitable for a larger population because they

generate numerical data and are therefore closed in response (Cohen et al., 2007). 'Self-completion questionnaires' were employed as in Bryman (2001) cited in Burgess et al. (2006:79). The advantages of using open-ended questionnaires is that everyone answers the same questions, but with some flexibility. The freedom to respond in participants' own words rather than pre-set categories could steer to unexpected data emerging or multiple interpretations of the questions. Cohen et al. (2007) warn that open-ended questionnaires could lead to redundant and irrelevant information. Secondly, the analysis of data may be difficult and time consuming. On the other hand, it may reveal useful information and therefore capture the richness of data.

Originally, open-ended questionnaires were intended to collect personal details and initial information before embarking on the interviews. But the direction and focus changed after the pilot study to collect data from the learners only, as a result of my personal challenges linked to a knee injury, time constraints and lack of direct access to the learners. A colleague accepted to administer the questionnaires for me. Informed consent forms, invitation letters and a clarification letter to explain my absence were handed over (BERA, 2004); these were all translated in German. It was to enable the learners, 1) To understand their right to withdraw, 2) Not to answer any intrusive questions and, 3) To express themselves in a language that they were familiar with.

The items in the questionnaire were organised into broad themes with specific questions. My colleague distributed the questionnaires to 12 learners who completed them, and dropped them in a marked box, this was to enhance anonymity as argued

in Hammersley et al. (2007) and BERA (2004). Secondly, it was to encourage them to express their opinion freely without fear of being identified through handwriting. Although, I had indicated that they could take them home, they declined and preferred to complete them on site because as adult learners they have other commitments that may make it difficult for them to write from home.

### **3.9.5 Document analysis**

Documents are a useful source of data and may bring clarity of the phenomena under study (Prior, 2003; Burgess et al., 2006; Plowright, 2012). The advantage is seen when they are studied within the context of research to assist in understanding the complex environment of the trainers, and their interpretations of improvements. Although the documents may not be written for the purpose of the study, Hammersley et al. (2003:184) suggest that they ‘may enable the researcher to gain information about events you cannot observe’. Further, Cohen et al. (2007) argue, documents do not have ‘reactivity effects’ like in interviews. Furthermore, there are some disadvantages associated with issues of validity and reliability, which the researcher should address. This is tied to the selection of the documents and matters of bias (Burgess et al., 2006; Plowright, 2012). Hammersley et al. (2007) reminds researchers to pay attention to ethical issues while using documents.

The following documents were obtained: minutes of meetings, departmental emails, recruitment advertisements, students’ feedback evaluation forms on trainers, and the Project Plan (New Star Policy, 2013, 2014). The documents were identified as being appropriate for the study; in terms of relevance, genuineness, credibility, and

because of how they fitted the case. The names of the document were changed to protect the identity of the school. Clear restrictions were conveyed not to use copies with the institution's logo on, which was visible on the form.

Some of the documents were in German and were therefore translated into English; pseudonyms were used for the people mentioned for anonymity and privacy reasons. During analysis, colour coding was done according to emerging themes, which were also compared to the literature read. Open-ended notes were written to develop categories of information (Charmaz, 2006). Separate notes were kept on the researcher's remarks and interpretations of the content. The use of quotations in the thesis was negotiated.

Below I will look at the Students' feedback evaluation forms and ethical issues involved, and then New Star Vocational College policy documents in details.

#### **3.9.6 Students' feedback evaluation forms**

Students' feedback form is a kind of evaluation tool used to assess the trainers' performances. As the interviews were conducted, documentary evidence of the trainer's quality and teaching quality was obtained from the student feedback forms, usually filled out at the end of the course. Normally, they bare confidential comments that reflect the trainer's performance. They were used to compare the respondents' views in the interviews. The examination of the forms assisted in the analysis and in identifying the needs of the learners as well as of those of the trainers. Some of the information was used, 1) To rewrite the interview questions concerning the learners' attitudes towards learning, 2) To understand how they learn and whether they can be compared to how children learn, 3) To find out what they

enjoy and what they do not enjoy in learning classroom activities, and 4) To perceive the characteristics of a good trainer and their suggestions on improving trainers' professional skills. Other parts illustrated successful experiences for the trainers that led to satisfaction in their work or unsuccessful incidents that ended up in dissatisfying scenarios.

The New Star Vocational College policy document was also used to develop the learners' questionnaire in order to gather data that provided rich descriptions in the findings.

### **3.9.7 Ethical issues of using the students' feedback evaluation forms**

There were ethical issues involved in using the students' evaluation forms, which had to be addressed because the information written was supposed to be confidential about trainers' overall performance. I was aware that these documents had not been written with the intention of research data (Cohen et al., 2007), so there was a possibility that they could be highly biased and selective (Bailey, 1994). These documents had been written for the managers and Public Employment Service.

I negotiated for direct access to students' evaluation forms by stating my interest, use and relevance of the documents to my study. There were clear restrictions imposed, for example, I should not use any of the copies for display in the thesis because the company's logo appeared on the sheets; at the top, across and at the bottom. I adhered to the restrictions in order to protect the institutions' name (BERA, 2004). I was allowed to use data and quotations from the documents. Although, the forms did not bear the names of the writer, I still decided to use pseudonyms for analysis

purposes. The only identification mark on the forms was the level of the class, dates and duration of the course. It would have been possible to find out the identity of the trainer discussed in the forms, instead I concentrated on the levels of the learners. I collected forms from the beginners, intermediate and advanced levels. It was important to understand the needs of the learners, their own challenges and difficulties of learning while mastering daily pursuits as well as their perception of quality learning, views of a good trainers, and the kind of recommendations they made.

### **3.9.8 New Star Vocational College policy document**

The New Star Vocational College policy documents (2013, 2014) provided data that I could not have found anywhere else. It provided clear evidence on issues that were of concern to my research. Firstly, it contained; detailed contextual information, managerial annual targets, mission statements, structure of the courses, trainer duties and required qualifications, and entrance requirements for the learners. This evidence was compared with interview data, and helped to validate some of the challenges experienced by the trainers.

Secondly, it led me to search the literature, and to deepen my knowledge on the demands of the labour market programmes and re-integration of unemployed people, learning behaviour, and learning strategies. The translated data allowed the development of research questions 1 and 4, concerning the managerial support, unemployed learners, and professional development for trainers. The rich descriptions enabled me to have better understanding in analysing the findings of what was happening, and the need to promote psycho-value for the learners in

preparation for the labour market in relationship with developing additional skills and competence of the trainers.

Thirdly, other aspects that emerged were contradictions of what is expected in New Star Vocational College. After reading literature on learning theories, it was clear that the teaching methods were unsuitable for the target learner. Some of the content details steered me to contact some trainers and to listen to their opinion of suggested teaching methods. 14 out of 17 participants were not aware of the document, and it was in a language that renders the requirements and expectations of the outcomes difficult to understand.

The section below will describe in details ethical issues observed.

### **3.10 Ethical Considerations**

Conducting a qualitative study with an interpretive approach required methodological clarity, as it raises ethical matters tied to the nature of the research and context, and the multiple roles of the researcher in relation to the participants at different stages of the study (Burgess et al., 2006). The consideration of these ethical issues before collecting data were addressed as outlined below guided by (BERA, 2004: 5-9).

This ethical guideline identifies ethical issues that touch on the research participants that the researcher must pay attention to. The researcher's responsibilities to the participants include:

- 1) Voluntary informed consent

Before participating in the research, the participants must understand the nature of the research and their involvement. Then, they are free to agree to participate.

## 2) Deception

There should be no deception or subterfuge to obtain data

## 3) Right to withdraw

The researcher should respect the participants' right to withdraw for any or no reason, at any time.

4) Children, vulnerable young people and vulnerable adults must be considered and protected.

## 5) Incentives

The use of incentives must be well considered and used appropriately but not in a manner to create undesirable effects.

## 6) Detriment arising from participation

The researcher has the duty to make known any predictable detrimental arising from the study.

## 7) Privacy

The researcher should recognize the participants' right to privacy, and must guarantee them confidentiality and anonymity. The participants have a right to know how their data will be stored and used. They also have a right to their personal data collected.

## 8) Disclosure

The researcher has a duty to disclose any harmful or illegal behaviour after careful consideration and with the understanding of the participants or other stakeholders.



Before taking part in the study, all the participants were fully informed of the aim of the study, their involvement and what they would be required to do and how the data collected would be used. They were further advised that the collected data would be treated in a confidential manner, their participation was voluntary and they had the right to withdraw without fear of any consequences at any time they felt like. Any information they gave would be treated confidentially and anonymously. They were also informed of how data would be stored, used and disseminated. All these explanations were put in writing before commencing with the interview sessions and sent out accompanied by an invitation letter to potential participants (See appendix 1 informed consent form)

In our meetings, I again explained the need for the study, role of participants and the right to withdraw. This session enabled me to clear any doubts, answer questions and clarify issues. Further, I confirmed to the participants that the study had not been ordered by New Star Vocational College or Public Employment Service, it was my own initiative to improve our skills as trainers and to be better. I assured them that their personal identity and comments would not be shared with the institution. Following this clarification period, the majority confirmed their willingness to take part and gave their consent in writing.

Below are some of the measures taken to ensure that ethical considerations were observed:

- Anonymity of the research participants was done by selecting pseudonyms during the data collection and transcribing stages. Pseudonyms were allocated based on assumed names. However, being a small English department some respondents may be able to tell the identity of other

respondents. (Interviews, questionnaires and students' evaluation forms, see P. 101)

- The name of the institution was changed to New Star Vocational College to protect the identity of the school.
- I clarified and informed the respondents of how their data would be kept and also how the result would be reported (see informed consent form appendix 1)
- The participants were given freedom to control what they wished to share with the researchers and to limit access, as they deemed right (Cohen et al., 2007). This aspect was demonstrated in the questionnaire where some questions were left blank, their choice to answer was respected.
- Permission to obtain and use documents (NSVC Policy, 2013 and 2014) and Students feedback forms (student evaluation forms and ethical issues see section 3.9.7)
- Authorisation to use quotations from transcripts, documents and audio-recordings, and recommendations from meetings was negotiated individually.
- Allowing participants to see their interview accounts and to challenge them or make amendments during data collection and analysis stages was done through email contact. Some details were changed on request following this review process and my interpretations were reviewed by my 'critical friend'
- Explanation of the data collection methods (use of audio-recording/notes)
- Researcher contact details for easy contact (See informed consent form appendix 1)

Another ethical consideration was the role of the researcher in ones' environment in terms of bias, this was carefully analysed (See section 3.17). This is associated with researchers' cultural background and professional knowledge, researchers' multiple roles as insider and outsider that may influence the selection of participants, choice of words and even the analysis processes (See section 3.7). Respondent validation (Hammersley et al., 2003) enables the researcher to ensure that the participants' views are represented although criticism in Grounded Theory (Charmaz, 2006) shows that it is difficult to avoid the researchers' interpretations in the analysis processes. The language used in reporting the findings also reflects ethical challenges for the researcher. Creswell (2009) cautions researchers about using unjust language, and reporting inaccurate representation of the findings in the research.

The researcher's multiple roles raises diverse ethical challenges at different stages of the research processes (Burgess et al., 2006). These aspects were considered and guided by BERA (2004), Hammersley et al. (2007), and Cohen et al. (2007). My responsibility was to ensure that trust and confidentiality were adhered to. Therefore, I cultivated and established a good relationship with the participants to foster progress of the study in the next 3 years. As a researcher my duty was to observe the regulatory ethical framework in the institution, country and Open University. It was also my responsibility to uphold the standards of the research community.

As the researcher I had prepared for interviewing, distributing the questionnaires and collecting documents, it was not possible to be prepared for everything because of ethical matters that arose following my knee injury. I had to deal with ethical issues

by reacting and responding to when the interviews would take place, and to make decisions to have the location shift to my house without interrupting the participants' work or progress of the study. I offered meals, lunch or dinner depending on the interview schedule time; whether this was an incentive is open to judgement. It was important to be sensitive to the participants' feelings and body language, and to adhere to the agreed guidelines, and to understand that the interview participants were using their private time to do the interviews unlike the learners who had filled out the questionnaire during learning time.

Section 3.10.1 describes how I negotiated access.

### **3.10.1 Negotiating access**

I negotiated access by using the existing good relationship with the project-coordinator to discuss how I would approach the top managers because their offices were not on site. The project coordinator was in charge of the institution, trainers and learners, therefore permission was secured at first verbally and then in written form. There was a lengthy discussion on the 'gatekeepers' critical views and concerns including: time, resources, disruption and fear of wrong image and matters of overall privacy (McFadyen, 2016). Informed consent meant giving full details of the study and establishing my ethical position as a serious researcher to secure participation

I provided a clear amount of purpose and type of access required, at first personally, and then by writing a letter to state the intention of the study and requirements, which included the possible benefits to the institution, managers and trainers. I also discussed

concerns about granting access in terms of resources and time that would be involved, which would be kept to a minimum level. We also discussed the topic of the study, issues of confidentiality regarding data, anonymity of the institution and even of the participants (BERA, 2004). These issues were clearly stated in the introductory letter and in informed consent form. It included storage of data, issues of validating the transcriptions and providing a report of the findings to interested stakeholders. Further, to facilitate easy communication, my telephone number and Email address were provided and written on the consent form.

Other issues considered in details included, the description of the general research design, including location of interviews, role of the participants: managers, trainers and learners and, a clear description of the researcher's roles, responsibilities, and commitment. The interactions also focused on duration of the study and how the research results would be disseminated. The participants consented to take part in the study based on full information about participation rights and use of the study data. This was a lengthy process but I allowed myself sufficient time to gain physical access.

The section below describes data analysis in Grounded Theory.

### **3.11 Data analysis**

The analysis of qualitative data from different sources though complex, allows the multiple perspectives of the research participants to enhance the improvement of learning. Charmaz (2006) suggests that issues of researcher bias and data selection may persist throughout the process of data analysis. The strategy is to control the

researcher's power by making explicit the methods used and paying attention to the participants' role. In the case study, it was important to choose Grounded Theory as a method of analysis that allows 'data to speak for themselves', it involves discovery of theory from data (Glaser and Strauss, 1967) rather than using hypothesis to prove a theory or refute it. My inexperience in Grounded Theory and relevant debates created some doubts in the beginning linked to the indication that in applying Grounded Theory, a researcher should not be tied to any philosophical framework. In contrast, Charmaz (2006) encourages the researcher to focus on flexibility in constructing theory to advance knowledge rather than concentrate on contending descriptions of Grounded Theory.

Section 3.11.1 describes the rationale for using Grounded Theory.

### **3.11.1 Rationale for Grounded Theory (GT)**

I chose Grounded Theory discovered by Glaser and Strauss (1967) and further developed by Charmaz (2006). Charmaz's Constructive Grounded Theory gave me the possibility: 1) To be flexible and to follow up leads, or my own intuition, 2) To gather more data from multiple sources and to analyse it, 3) To approach new interviewees, and 4) To remain open and to appreciate my role as insider researcher, and to answer the key research questions, to understand the perspective and context of the trainers, learners and managers.

The model of Grounded Theory appeared at a period when researchers were questioning the positivists' position in social science. Grounded Theory was a phrase used by Glaser and Strauss (1967) to describe the iterative nature of collecting data and analysing it simultaneously within the qualitative research. They further argued

that the aim was to inductively extract theory from data, which in turn would guide data collection in an attempt to produce theoretical propositions. Grounded Theory enabled me to begin analysing the data as soon as it was collected, before it accumulated like in other approaches. In this study, the literature review was considered before data collection for contextual factors, and during data gathering and other processes (Charmaz, 2006). In opposition, Glaser (1998) argued that an initial literature review would influence the researcher to have preconceived ideas; it would be best to wait for the initial analysis and findings. But the advantage of consulting literature review all the time is that it allowed me to test emerging hypothesis in relation to other researchers' definitions.

I collected data from a variety of sources, interviews, questionnaires and documents. However, emphasis was placed on use of systematic procedures (Strauss and Corbin, 1994; Glaser, 1996), which focused on coding, theoretical sampling, constant comparison, and identification of core categories, data saturation and development of theory. The data collected and analysed was kept in files under memorable codes to enable an audit trail of the analysis.

During the constant comparison, I continually compared new data with the already collected, the process leads the researcher to move back and forth between data collected and new findings that guide further data collection. The researcher begins by asking a question(s) that lead to the generation of a theory. Then the process steers towards identifying the initial sample (theoretical sampling), the data collected is coded and analysed. The analysis of data collected provides guidance and shapes the next stages of collecting data hence the sampling process is guided by on-going

theory development (Strauss and Corbin, 1990). The comparative process goes on until the researcher reaches a point (data saturation) at which no new information or relevant ideas are emerging from data (Strauss and Corbin, 1998, Cohen et al., 2007).

In coding, data is broken down into manageable bits and reconstructed through coding to provide explanations by looking at similarities and differences (Glaser and Strauss, 1967). Data is grouped into categories and assigned codes, which Miles and Huberman (1994:56) defined as ‘tags or labels for assigning units of meaning to the descriptive or inferential information during the study’. Data is analysed in three stages first, open coding (Cohen et al., 2006) where the researcher identifies the units that are relevant by using codes in the form of words and phrases. Axial coding (Ezzy, 2002; Creswell, 1998) which is the stage that looks at the interrelatedness of the codes and categories, which then are compared to the existing theory. Finally, selective coding is where the core category is identified and its relationship to other codes is made clear through narrative (Charmaz, 2006). The process of memoing helps to facilitate the relationship between codes and codes, and codes and categories. The last stage is reached when the researcher has completed gathering data, coded, memoed and generated theory.

Section 3.12.2 points out critics of Grounded Theory.

### **3.11.2 Critics of Grounded Theory**

Strauss and Corbin (1990) went further to develop Grounded Theory to accommodate the participants’ perceptions and opinions. Debates have been raised about its use in research. Its critics characterise the original approach in Grounded Theory as contradictory and inconsistent while promoting positivists tendencies: 1)



Objective reality, 2) An impartial researcher who develops theory from data, 3) A reduction inquiry of manageable research problems, and 4) Dealing with data objectively (Charmaz, 2003). Before that, Stern (1994) pointed out that the respective positions outlined by Strauss (1987) and Glaser (1994) represent two fundamentally different approaches.

On the other hand, Law and McLeod (1994) argue that Grounded Theory's generative methodology and nature, enables the researcher to cope with data relating to multiple variables than positivists models, which restrict the number of variables and assume some as irrelevant. Others have identified issues of bias, validity and generalisability. Likewise, is Gasson (2006:89) who argues that

The interpretive Grounded Theory researcher must consider the defensibility of their work more deeply than the positivist, as interpretive does not yet have a body of knowledge and tradition embedded into procedures to perform rigorous, interpretive research.

Charmaz (2006) took a Constructionist Grounded Theory approach; the advantage is that it has a more adaptive component even where the situation is complex. It encourages the researcher's interpretations and meanings to emerge through writing memos. Glaser (2002) criticised Charmaz's approach as remodelling Grounded Theory into a qualitative data analysis methods that is more concerned with accurate descriptions. Glaser pointed out that through comparing and contrasting categories, the researcher's bias is eliminated while theory is generated. He argued that in Constructive Grounded Theory, researcher's bias could contaminate the data during the description stage. Later on, he suggested that bias could be used as a source of data Glaser (2010) and further insisted that 'Grounded Theory is a concept, not a descriptive study of a descriptive problem'.

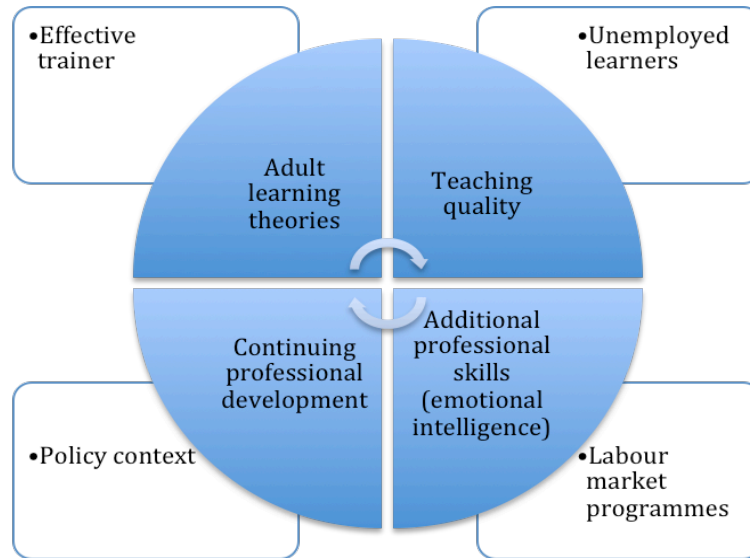
The following section defines my conceptual framework.

### **3.12 My conceptual framework and the links to my methods and analysis**

During the data analysis my theoretical framework emerged to be between educational and psychological theories, in an exploratory manner, as opposed to quantitative design that uses already ‘established theory to deduce hypothesis from it before conducting their studies’ (Charmaz, 2006:311). My approach to reading and re-reading, and then comparing the data from transcripts with concepts from literature assisted me in establishing patterns and connection to work in the framework. It shows how the participants relate their experiences, backgrounds and beliefs but also indicate how it has influenced the way they perceive learning and teaching. The descriptions in the transcripts fit with some of the readings on theories of learning especially self-directed learning, experiential and critical reflection learning, teaching quality and Day’s (1999) developing teachers’ professional development (through Wenger’s (1967) communities of practice in collaborative and participatory learning) as illustrated in figure 3.1 below.

The diagram focuses on the key research question and the need to have an effective trainer for unemployed learners within the existing policy context of the labour market programmes.

**Figure 3.1** Conceptual Frameworks



First, the circle and its parts show how trainers could achieve improvements by understanding adult learning theories while targeting better teaching quality. Secondly, sustaining teaching quality could occur through continuing professional development activities as suggested in the data analysis. A key issue, suitable for the unemployment classes is the cultivation of additional professional skills in terms of emotional intelligence, which has emerged from data.

Some of the theoretical codes that emerged, allowed me to conceptualise the organisation of key ideas. As the study progressed and drew to an end, my thoughts and ideas had remarkably changed from the initial point. However, certain issues recurred even in the literature and data collection that seemed to influence my explanations and descriptions.

The following section illustrates how data was managed in the analysis stage.

### **3.12.1 Data management- use of a summary contact sheet**

As the research progressed it was important to establish reliable data management tools because of emerging issues bearing on collection and analysis in Grounded Theory. In the early phases of data, I kept a diary to keep track of data collection but during the analysis, I realised that it was important to manage the various sources of data and participants. I knew that if I did not find a reliable tool, I risked being 'buried' by the data. Therefore, this study modified a tool of analysis that was mentioned by Miles and Huberman (1994), the Summary Contact sheet. They suggested:

- Ensuring high-quality, accessible data
- Documentation of analysis that have been carried out
- Retention of data even after the study is complete.

Levine (1985) argued that there was no boundary between data collection and analysis and this is true of Grounded Theory, where data is analysed in tandem with data collection. Although I organised computerised files and index cards, I felt that there was so much information to remember, for example field notes written after each interview, emerging codes, follow ups and literature to be read. I developed my own design to enable me to:

- Have a focused and clear overview of data
- Keep track of data, interviews and interviewees, and location
- Record emerging themes and follow ups
- Organise data for early analysis and as an on-going data analysis process in Grounded Theory
- Collect new data by preparing evolutionary interview schedules
- Test hypothesis that emerged

- Enable the researcher to make strategic decisions

Below are examples of themes that emerged from the processes of coding recorded in summary contact sheet for interview three,

- Encountering difficulties
- Sharing with colleagues
- Notable changes in learners
- The trainers in the classroom
- Advice to new trainers
- Need for personal improvements

These themes were notable in the first 2 interviews but stood out in this particular one. (See appendix 7) for a complete example, this tool was a simple way to summarise data during the study period, which began at the initial analysis (first coding), second stage of coding, and emerging themes captured in memoing. This tool was used to integrate the study's data and to speed the analysis in Grounded Theory by recording codes that had emerged and comparing them across the interviews. It could be useful to other doctorate students as it was of value to me.

Section 3.13 explains the analysis process.

### **3.13 Analysis in process**

The research data was collected either in German or English (Interviews) or in some cases in both languages, depending on the participants' choice of language. The students' open-ended questionnaire and the documents were in German. The interviews were transcribed and some translated into English. The questionnaire, documents (New Star Vocational College policy 2013, 2014) and students' feedback evaluation forms were translated.

The analysis of data began early during the transcription and this enabled categories to emerge. I did line-by-line coding using different colours; codes were identified and given labels in a process of initial coding (Glaser and Strauss, 1967; Hughes and Jones, 2003; Charmaz, 2006; Holton, 2010; Gibbs, 2010). Data was broken into manageable bits that were rearranged through comparing the similarities and differences. Some of the codes adopted the participants' words, which Strauss (1987) referred to as *in vivo* in a process of analytical interaction while others were fitted to the researchers' interpretations. The detailed way of coding also controlled the researcher of some of the presumptions. (See appendix 3 for line-by-line coding). I identified several preliminary themes and wrote memos that also reflected my processes of thinking, relevance of the data, saturation of codes and even emerging theoretical propositions.

After coding the interviews, the second stage of analysis was to sort and select the initial codes. The codes that had appeared several times helped to synthesise and analyse big volumes of data. The focused codes elevated the theoretical direction of the analysis by making it clear what themes were emerging from the data. Each theme was in turn compared and further similarities were sought through asking analytical questions. Some of the themes were revised and modifications done to enable a fit between data and theory (Glaser and Strauss, 1967). The relationship was validated in data and where more data was required theoretical sampling was done until data saturation was reached. The objective was to develop theory from data.

The focused set of codes allowed me to revisit my literature notes and texts, which were linked to the ultimate research questions. For example, (see appendix 5 table A. 7) 'challenges of teaching the long-term unemployed learner'. Some of the codes

were used to provide the final themes. The themes have been outlined to illustrate, and also to assess their relevance to the experiences of the trainers of unemployed learners in one location in Austria within adult education.

The final coding of the data from interviews produced the following themes:

- 1) Adult education in NSVC
- 2) Perceptions of teaching quality and characteristics of a good trainer
- 3) Continuing professional development
- 4) Change in the organisation and administration

In comparing data with data to develop codes, I also compared trainers who had taught unemployed people with those who had taught employed people. I also compared teaching adults with teaching children, how adults learn with how children learn, and I also compared descriptions of situations/moments that trainers enjoy most while teaching the adult with those that they enjoy least. This allowed me to have the flexibility to follow up codes that I thought were promising as theoretical categories. It also enabled me to pursue ideas that conceptualised the data, to question the data and even some of the codes.

The codes that emerged from the open-ended questionnaire, New Star Vocational College policy documents, emails and minutes of meetings were used to strengthen the themes above. All the codes were held on index cards and also stored in electronic files.

The following section describes how translation was done.

### 3.15 Translation in process

To conduct my research in Austria meant that there were problematic issues in translation that I had to address from the beginning:

- Ethical and epistemological issues
- Collaborating with colleagues in the translation processes
- Translation and analysis in Grounded Theory
- Challenges of using two languages to carry out the research.

The first challenge involved interacting with participants who had no knowledge of English and on the other hand native speakers of English. Little is written about using translators in cross-language research, language difference or use of a third party across languages (Temple, 1997; Birbil, 2000). The only suggestion in literature is that there is no one correct translation but there are options to choose from rather than using word for word translation in different language. Suggestions to increase validity are well discussed, and examples are given in the arguments presented below.

Involving my colleagues created ethical issues especially of privacy and anonymity (BERA, 2004). I discussed with them the need to protect the information that emerged out of the data collected. But mostly, I relied on the trust that we had built in working together as colleagues.

Epistemological challenges were observed in conveying the meaning that the participants put across. Temple (2002) and Temple and Young (2004) warn that the



social world influences the perspective of people and colours the way the translator interprets and translates data. I had chosen to work from the interpretive-constructionists perspective, which supports and acknowledges the difference in the way people view social reality. I experienced various ways of presenting meaning, especially in describing the complex reality of trainers and learners. I also had to guard against my colleague imposing her beliefs and experiences in the translation process, which could probably distort the real picture of the data collected. Another challenge that occurred was identifying suitable words or concepts that reflected the participants' interpretations rather than my own standpoint. To minimise the misrepresentations, I engaged in discussions with my colleagues and also checked that I did not impose my framework on the colleagues. This was necessary because in the early data collection stages, experience had taught me to collaborate with others in all processes of translation in order to do away with getting a feeling of being 'detached/alienated' from my own research. This had happened at the beginning of the research, it was based on the initial words chosen by the translator that had made me feel like a stranger to own my research.

Another difficulty that occurred was located in finding conceptual equivalence, which was not found in the dictionary (Birbili, 2000). There was a certain degree of doubt whether the meaning was comparable in both languages. I was aware that certain aspects like emotions or utterances probably would not be captured in the translation and would therefore get lost. During the interviews, Cynthia an interviewee talked about the concept of teaching quality but found it difficult to match/access an equivalent concept. My colleague and I had to look at the contextual factors and other stakeholders because literal translation did not sound natural. We

decided to approach some words from the cultural meaning and then assessed how they fitted in the target language. The concept of education has so many meanings, but for our context we settled for the German word 'Ausbildung' which incorporates: training, apprenticeships, instruction, school, vocational training, In-service training, training-on-the job, development, and staff training. While deciding on the equivalence of the word education and the concept of adult education, there were so many words used synonymously, therefore 'Weiterbildung' was fitted with further education, continuing education, advanced training, on-the-job training and professional development.

During translation, I preferred to use front translation, which is translating data from the source language to the target language (Nurjannah et al., 2014). The second type was backward translation, which is translating data from the target language back to the source language. In the initial data collection stage, we tried to do backward translation but it seemed to be more of trying to fit the data instead of seeking validity. What became useful was the frequent use of interactions in transcribing because we realised that backward translation did not make it any easier to deal with conceptual equivalence nor cultural differences (Brislin, 1970). By writing memos, I was able to capture some of the decisions made on choice of words and preferred concepts. My observations were that the translation process took longer than I had expected. To check for validity and reliability, I consulted a third person who is a linguist to confirm if the data translated was close in meaning.

Translation in Grounded Theory was linked to how data was analysed especially in the early stages where data was broken down into fragments to enable initial coding.

In this particular framework of analysis, it was difficult to remain neutral during the analysis stages and it became necessary to engage with a colleague to reflect on the nature of the research. Data was coded line-by-line and the most appropriate label identified. I used gerunds as recommended by Charmaz (2006) where nouns are formed from verbs. Gerunds in English have no equivalent in German. So that was another reason why we ruled out backward translation as a method of verification. There was need to write memos to consolidate the codes into a narrative that could present the difficulties of teaching unemployed learners. Language was used to describe the experiences of the participants' constructions. Sometimes it was difficult to capture the meaning, especially when the participants began with the words 'I don't know how to say.... how can I describe' (Selena, an interviewee). The challenge of using two languages is presented in the examples below.

Grammar and linguistic rules in the two languages, mostly about how words are arranged and linked to make sentences created problems in translation (Wagner, 2009). German has often long complicated sentences, which the researcher/translator sometimes found difficult to translate into short and precise sentence. Rubin and Rubin (1995) argued that in translating quotations the risk of losing information from the original language is greater and even editing quotations in ones language could lead to misrepresenting the intended meaning. Often this occurred in the fact that some nouns are attached together, for example 'Volkshochschule'- adult education centres with three nouns or Weiterbildungsangebot- further education offer.

Other problems experienced were in words, which look similar (false friends) but have different meanings, 'Bekommen' and 'become'. 'Bekommen' is the equivalent of (get, obtain....) while 'become' in German is the equivalent of 'werde' other examples are 'sensitive' and 'sensibel' and 'sensible'. The use of articles before nouns 'die', 'der' and 'das' became cumbersome when translated in English. This is reflected in my writing too where I have sometimes tended to overuse the article 'the' before nouns, a rule that has 'hang over' from German grammar, because all nouns have an article defined in feminine, masculine and neutral. Therefore, in learning German, nouns have to be literally learned together with the correct articles. Certain adverbs too presented challenges during translation because English can do without them since they are mostly used for emphasis only. From the experience gathered during research, there was no direct translation for the word 'doch' which is used in many different ways to mean: but, however, after all, anyway and indeed. It is a small word but the challenge was time-consuming in trying to fit it in a suitable context in English. The next challenge fitted with what Rossman and Rallis (1998) question, whether translated words could be perceived as direct quotations. This was not only a dilemma but also a slow process, which called for discussions to decide on the appropriate words to represent the participants' meaning.

During the interviews, I noted no difference of meaning on occasions that I shared a common language (English) with the participants. The data collected, transcribed and analysed seemed to stay close to the data during initial coding as suggested by Glaser and Strauss (1967). In contrast, where the researcher did not share a common language, data was discussed during translation about how to express particular words, for example the word 'Spass' was taken to mean fun in learning rather than

enjoyment, delight, amusement, pleasure and relaxation. It seemed to express the intended meaning of learning. Moreover, for the native speakers of English, they seemed to capture the meaning linguistically. This challenge occurred in our first phase of data collection even though my colleague is a bilingual trainer who studied modern languages and translation. Hence, we discussed key words like:

Qualität =quality

Qualitätstraining =quality teaching

Erwachsenenbildungsanbieter =adult education provider

Professionelle Entwicklung von Trainerinnen = professional development for trainers.

It was important to represent the participants' voice and to stay close to the data because loss of meaning would reduce validity (Denzin and Lincoln, 2000).

To increase validity I did the following:

- Looked for strategies to deal with translation problems
- Considered the advantages and disadvantages of back translation
- Consulted others
- Discussed problematic words
- Got interpretations from respondents
- Used many quotations from participants to increase trustworthiness, and used reflection in the process of translation and analysis (Temple, 2008).

My role and that of my colleague was to produce accounts that represented the subjective reality of the research participants within the cross-cultural context. On

the other hand, in my research I have not given the translators who supported me a visible role although I have acknowledged them.

The following section will describe the measures taken to reduce bias.

### **3.16 Issues of validity, reliability and bias**

The procedures of data collection and analysis have been outlined and described in detail. It is essential to admit the likely sources of bias during the collection, selection and analysis of data.

In quantitative research, the scientific concept of validity is that the outcome should represent accurate measurements of what the test set to achieve (Hammersley et al., 2007). Equally, Cohen et al. (2005:133) point out established ‘measurements of standard error’ procedures, which have to be acknowledged, and therefore validity can be improved through careful sampling. In contrast, validity in qualitative research entails a wider scope that can be evaluated through ‘honesty’, ‘depth’, ‘richness’ and scope of data achieved. Hammersley et al. (2003) indicates that ‘plausible’ and ‘credible’ judgements can be made about given information.

Another issue considered was reliability in its classical sense of replicating the results if the research was done again but that did not apply to this case study. Rather the case study argues for generalisability/transferability/applicability of the findings to a similar environment (Schofield, 2007).

Subjectivity aspects concerning participants’ views and perspectives that could contribute to bias are addressed below together with researcher bias.

### 3.17 Researcher Bias

The researcher is an instrument of data collection and interpretation in this study, and may therefore be affected by inherent existing conditions. Knowledge in this study is socially and culturally bound, it is impossible to say that theory is neutral or unattached (Popkewitz, 1984). Further, Adler and Adler (1987:86) warn of the ‘baggage’ the researcher brings to the research setting. For example, my prior professional experience and knowledge, and cultural background will definitely colour the way I perceive the participants, data interpretations and selection. Other kinds of bias may occur due to participants’ reactivity effects. Hammersley et al. (1992) cited in (Cohen et al., 2007:135) suggests ‘intensive personal involvement and in-depth responses of individuals secures a sufficient level of validity and reliability’.

To improve validity in this research, triangulation of data collection methods, self-criticism/critical friend, and a diary were employed. The use of multiple sources of data enabled the researcher to counter check claims using evidence collected from interviews, questionnaires and documents. Recording interviews and sometimes taking notes seemed to give more weight to some arguments and opinions than others. The pilot study tested the instruments procedures, which helped to reveal hidden sources of bias and also increased confidence in representing reality as perceived by the trainers. Researcher bias was addressed through reflexivity; I kept a diary throughout the study for self-scrutiny; my interpretations and explanations were written separately from the facts of research processes.

In the last strategy, I held discussions with a critical friend who mostly pointed out my ambiguities, and sometimes the one-sided judgement I had on certain key issues. Alternative solutions and further questions emerged during sessions with my colleagues especially during translation. The opportunity to explain the research, and present preliminary findings to different trainers in different locations, and to receive constructive feedback on possible sources of social-cultural bias and valuable criticism of the research, contributed to progress in my research.

The section below discusses issues of differential power relationships and implications for ethics, and bias.

### **3.18 Differential power relationships and implications for ethics/bias**

The issue of power differential is discussed from the managers-trainers relationship and researcher-participants interactions. Having power can mean a lot of things, for example, being able to influence others, possessing a capacity for financial strength and control over resources, and even job security (Magee and Galinsky, 2008). French and Raven (1959:152-156) identified five bases of power: coercive, reward, legitimate, referent, and expert. The different frames of power indicate that power can be used in fitting ways or be abused. Absence of power can mean lack of autonomy and freedom to perform one's job, and therefore one is likely to experience low esteem, job dissatisfaction and even unfair treatment (Keltner et al., 2003). Power exists in relation to others, for example in NSVC trainers rely on high-powered managers for permission to carry out duties. The argument here is that there is no equal distribution of power. The results are mistrust, fear and resentment, and vulnerability. The trainers' vulnerability is equivalent to insecurity. This is because



the trainers do not know or have any idea of what the future in the institution will bring, and therefore are still at risk of losing their jobs, and redundancy is part of the college's culture as explained in chapter 1. Consequently, the trainers experience conflicts and misunderstandings, fear, and frustration because power differential appear to be great and not equivalent to expectations.

Power differential may be seen from two viewpoints for instance, power may constrain or may enhance one's ability to make good ethical decisions. Looking at power in the workplace, I realize that in New Star Vocational College, the trainers have no power, and being at the bottom of the hierarchy experience negative effects of power relationship such as job insecurity, short contracts, managerial constraints, and matters of redundancies. They appear to be placed in a vulnerable position. Some of the interviewees, Thomas, Leroy and Annalore depict some key issues that reflect on shortcomings of the managerial power that fail to fulfill the role of supporting individuals in terms of mentoring, developing, and training. Power differentials play a big role in the context of the trainers, which bring about key complications that should not be ignored regarding ethical considerations.

The implications, first, suggests that people may behave in a certain manner in response to authority, either by breaching organizational agreements or by disclosing information or even exaggerating it (Burger, 2009). Secondly, in cases where coercive power is used, the trainers may fear to report or discuss issues in case they lose their jobs. This kind of power creates an impersonal working environment. Solare, an interviewee, observed that 'trainers feel less accountable for certain actions because the culture of blame is embedded in the organization. When things

go wrong, the managers do not take responsibility, the blame is shifted to the trainers'. Roloff and Cloven (1990) suggested that perceptions also act as powerful influence on behaviour, when powerful differential are involved. Further, they suggest that these perceptions determine how people behave in ethical situations. Consequently, the hierarchical structure plays a vital role on how people react and behave in institutions.

In NSVC, cases of redundancies point out to trainers submitting to authority. On the other hand, it would be ignorant not to recognize the energy and motivation in which the trainers took part in my research especially after being made redundant. In taking part in the research, one can infer that this was in some way a channel or attempt to deal with conflict in which power differential had become an enigma. In whichever way, this study aimed at improving the trainers' capabilities, on the other hand, it seemed to have provided a voice not as a form of resisting power, but in a manner of pointing out issues that need to be addressed. I found myself placed in a compromising situation because a key manager in charge of organizing professional development opportunities for gender and diversity rejected being interviewed for reasons not explained. This was an ethical dilemma difficult to address.

From my own judgment, I am able to recognize what resulted in power abuse because trainers had limited power and influence on many things in the organizations. It led to tensions as indicated by Doris who was made redundant and had failed to get acknowledgement for good service she had rendered after so many years of service. This illustrates how power differential is a concern for those at the bottom of the hierarchy than those at the top. There is a lack of trust in the

relationship, which presents challenges, but the questions as to whether the managers are fully aware of how power differentials and potential misuse of power affect the trainers is difficult to discuss at this point. The complexities of these relationships can provide topics for future research.

It is important to point out that there may have been response biases in the words of the participants because of how they felt about managers and their ‘frustrating attempts’. But most participants expressed themselves in a genuine and convincing manner of matters that touched them. Cynthia, a senior manager points out that some of the key problems that affect trainers are large classes, restricted budget and no paid preparation time. Another good example is by Thomas an interviewee, who points out that NSVC is not interested in what the trainers do in the classroom. Similarly, Annalore suggests that the managers should support them in issues concerning learner difficulties instead of blaming them. Cialdini and Goldstein (2004) argued that power is distinct from influence, which involves behaviours, decisions or opinions intended to obtain compliance. In reality, compliance was expected of everyone in NSVC.

The next instant of power dynamics was between the researcher and the participants, which must be considered because, the issue of closeness and distant was felt. The researcher experienced closeness and familiarity when interviewing colleagues and distant when dealing with learners and managers. The learners felt insecure and became suspicious of the researcher because they assumed that the information they gave would be forwarded to the Public Employment Service, to monitor and control their unemployment benefits. It became important to assure them of their rights to

withdraw or request for destruction of any information given. (See section 3.7 role of researcher). On matters concerning gender and race, being a black woman interviewer, it portrays aspects of power imbalance embedded in hierarchical relationships. By alternating between the dimensions of closeness and distant, the researcher had no influence or control over the kind of data gathered or received. To maintain the balance of power, the researcher remained flexible and open, and adapted to participants' routines (Charmaz, 2006). The interpretive approach enabled the researcher to form relationships with the participants owing to the philosophical belief that supports the participants' understanding of reality in their own way.

From the participants' responses in the interview data, diversity of opinions reflects the need for empowerment in order to accomplish set goals and to have a good relationship. The emerging picture depicts trainers who possess working knowledge of managing their roles and they even go further to suggest some guidelines on how best to proceed in such situations. Some of the suggestions are collaborating in decision-making, and creating a harmonious atmosphere, a feeling of job satisfaction and self-esteem. The effects of disempowerment are seen in the interview responses of difficult discussions and challenges of teaching and learning experiences in the unemployment classrooms, lack of motivation and involvement to tackle needs. Other signs of power imbalance are seen in the culture of blame and lack of support. What emerges is that power balance is important in improvements, and even in steering changes. There is need for NSVC to consult other institutions or authority to address the current situation of trainer's conditions of work and need for professionalisation.

The following section focuses on my reflections on Grounded Theory.

### **3.19 My reflections and learning from using Grounded Theory**

This study enabled me to pursue a challenging topic of interest to me in an in-depth and original manner with very little relevant available literature. Out of the many cross-cultural studies I searched, almost no study touched on trainers in the unemployment context and foreign language acquisition. First, most of the studies focused on general trainers, health care and nurse educators, perception of gender roles, parenting processes, school reform, social justice, emerging leadership and other issues.

Secondly, despite the number of growing body of studies on continuing professional development, there is a limited development of studies on trainer practice professional development (Hackl and Frisenbichler, 2014; Schneeberger, 2012; Weber et al., 2012; Lassnigg, 2011). I found two studies commissioned by the European Commission that looked at trainer development. One was a document CEDEFOP (2010) based on a thematic working group to develop policy pointers to support trainers in-company training (VET-Vocational Educational Training), in order to develop their competencies. The paper was addressed to education and training-policy makers as well as decision makers. Some of the suggestions are relevant but not sector specific to train trainers to keep up with changes in a heterogeneous context. The second group of studies (Atwell and Baumgartl, 2008) used methods of investigation based on cases of practice rather than collecting data as in usual case studies. The study aimed to develop a common European Framework to train trainers and a framework for CPD for trainers but indicated that

trainer provisions were inconsistent and fragmented; there were cross-cultural issues, tensions and contradictions.

The methodology was adapted for data collection and analysis to study the key research problem, which included phases of data collection, which utilised semi-structured interviews, open-ended questionnaires and documents. Research Diary for July, 2014 reflects on challenges of collecting data for the main study. However, I was able to identify opportunities that were dependent on my context and difficulties of trainer accessibility. First, this was based on ‘the coming and going of trainers’, secondly, ‘the short term contracts’ and thirdly, on a knee injury that I suffered after the initial data collection, analysis and interpretations at the end of year 1. Silverman (2000:35) argues that ‘what happens in the field as you attempt to gather data is a source itself of data rather than just a technical problem in need of a solution’. While Glaser and Strauss (1967) insist that a researcher has to be sensitive to the context, which is a vital resource especially in the identification of the sample and understanding relationships. Similarly, Snow et al. (2003:187) argues that Grounded Theory requires the researcher to adapt to openness necessary to ‘allow conditions of the field and interest of the informants to guide foci’. Further, Charmaz (2006) suggests that Grounded Theory has an adaptive component even where the situation is complex.

In terms of carrying out educational research, this study has shown the usefulness of working with both incomplete and complex hypothesis that emerged from various sources. First, the advantage of using Grounded Theory was the development of theory at different levels of the study, which led to a rich development of concepts

(Strauss and Corbin, 1990). This would not have been possible with other methodologies. Secondly, the study has revealed that in the complicated context of adult education, the use of emerging and developmental approach to the interview schedules benefitted the research. This was probably the most important aspect in the study based on tacit understanding and trust built between the researcher and the participants on tacit knowledge (Polanyi, 1966; Dreyfus and Dreyfus, 1986; Eraut, 2000). Polanyi (1967) defined tacit knowledge, as that ‘which we know but cannot tell’, in contrast, Eraut (2000) exemplified how it occurs in non-formal learning, and warned about awareness and representation.

As the research progressed, I experienced the discovery of how trainers have challenges in their daily work and the kind of strategies they use to ‘survive’. Grounded Theory helped me to understand and explain additional skills some of them have developed to manage their duties and the kind of professional development they desire. Some of the suggestions made, and advice given were directed at beginning trainers and even managers, this information was not found in the literature I read. The study has also shown that both external and internal stakeholders have a tremendous influence on the setting, this relationship can be cultivated to ensure that institutional priorities are nurtured ranging from individual needs to team collaboration as a learning organisation.

The study focused on using translation strategies in a cross-cultural environment. Currently, very few studies provide guidelines on translation within a cross-cultural context. But even so, the use of two languages to collect data ensured that potential dangers of misunderstanding were reduced; modifications were done after the initial

study although the questions continued to develop as the research progressed. During translation work, the syntax and morphological aspects of the German and English language were considered to allow clear understanding of meaning, (Section 3.15 translation in process). Discussions on equivalence of meaning and conceptual equivalence were done, which often led to many hours of consultations.

### **3.19.1 Richness of data**

The richness of data was drawn from interactions and responses of the participants and is therefore, embedded in the concept of culture as argued by Dimmock (1998), who suggests that culture can also provide researchers with rich opportunities to examine organisational phenomena. On the other hand, he warns researchers about failing to take into account cultural and cross-cultural aspects. Although he does not provide extensive and detailed information on cultural differences, the danger of neglecting some of these aspects was observed at the beginning of my study. The lessons learned indicated a need to pay attention to specific issues like salutations, ethics, power and control over data, and for the researcher to be flexible.

Marshall and Batten (2004) warned that ethical conduct of researchers in cross culture research worldwide has a lengthy history of criticism but suggested that research should reflect on the needs and interests of the research participants. Similarly, Hofstede (1991) and Laroche (2003) argued that culture manifests itself in both visible (language, art, music) and in non-visible (experience, habits and preferences). In fact, in designing the interview and questionnaire items, some of these cultural differences were observed. The items were first developed in English and then translated into German. For the learner questionnaire, there was a clear



expectation that the answers would be in German. However, the interviews were different and depended on the participants' language priority.

Another development in the study was the researcher's ability to tolerate cultural differences and values especially when the interviews were conducted in my house. I was not prepared for the enthusiasm or shock expressed at the 'Kenyan hospitality' I tried to transmit through my house decorations and food. Marshall and Batten (2004) insist that cultural diversity manifests itself in all relationships, including research relationships. In addition, the benefit of the encounters produced rich data, described in varying language styles and expressions, enabled by the researcher's mode of questioning. The richness of data can be seen in the authentic and personal constructs that emerged, long quotations were carefully selected and included in the thesis, which Cohen et al. (2007) argue are immensely rich in data and detail.

Thomas and Bray (1995) suggest that single studies tend to ignore the influence of culture on school and leadership. They argue for a multi-level cultural perspective for better improvements, especially in adult education.

## Conclusions

In this chapter I have tried to describe and justify the decisions made in the light of choosing the interpretive/constructionist stance and the qualitative methodology, which allowed me to research a topic of interest to me. Based on the background of my philosophical and theoretical conviction, the research design is addressed and the reasons for adopting case study within Grounded Theory. Data collection processes and analysis are described in details and the choices made. The researcher's bias is

considered in relationship with data selection, issues of power differentials, translation processes and strategies used to increase validity are discussed.

Chapter 4 presents a picture of how data was analysed and interpreted.

## **Chapter 4**

### **4 Data analysis and interpretation**

#### **4.1 Introduction**

This chapter sets out to present data that was analysed from semi-structured interviews, open-ended questionnaires and documents. Data from these sources was triangulated (Denzin, 1978; Patton, 1990) as a method to corroborate and converge evidence that corresponded to the phenomena presented in the data. For example, data from transcribed interviews was analysed along side field notes and documents, and open-ended questionnaires. The different sources of evidence were used to strengthen the arguments put forward and to reinforce the challenges and the implications drawn from individual sources.

The analysis of the qualitative research data although elaborate, allowed the multiple perspectives of the participants to be presented. The methods of analysis are based and outlined in the analytical framework of Glaser and Strauss (1967) and Charmaz (2006) within the context of the study of trainers of unemployed adult learners in Austria, described in Chapter 3.

The reader will note that data collected from the open-ended questionnaire has less description but in combination with data from students' evaluation forms, the analysis contributed to key issues of teaching quality, qualities of a good trainer and the need for improving professional skills. Selected quotations have been used to illustrate the main points. Rich descriptions of data are presented in this thesis in the form of quotations, tables and figures.

As explained earlier in the methods section, the following themes shaped the final coding for all the data collected from interview transcripts, open-ended questionnaires and documents.

- Adult education in New Star Vocational College
- Perception of teaching quality
- Qualities of a good trainer
- Continuing professional development (Developing professional skills in the teaching career through CPD)
- Change in the organisation and administration.

#### **4.2 Research question 1: Adult education in New Star Vocational College**

The first theme emerged quite early in the data analysis and developed throughout the ideas given by different participants. Although they used different words, the majority of the participants pointed out some of the difficulties in teaching unemployed learners. To understand the challenges better, the interviewees were asked in the first interview schedule; how they had found the teaching of unemployed learners, their attitude towards learning, differences in approach to teaching children versus adults, reaction to class activities and mood in the classroom. In the second phase, I concentrated on their lack of engagement in the classroom but for phase 3, I chose to get a precise description of the challenges.

The following key points explain adult education learning in New Star Vocational College:

- Differences in the approach to teaching adults versus children
- Experiences of teaching unemployed learners
- The unemployed learner's attitude towards learning in the class

- Challenges of teaching unemployed learners
- Learners' own perception of difficulties
- Dealing with difficulties
- Needs of unemployed learners

#### 4.2.1 Differences in the approach to teaching adults versus children

In order to understand these challenges, I decided to find out how adults learn by comparing and contrasting them to the way children learn. This was as a result of the data from the students' evaluation feedback forms about trainer performance. Most of the learners remarked that they were being treated like children. 16 out of 18 trainers commented that these target learners required a different approach to teaching.

Maria, an experienced trainer has worked with unemployed learners for 10 years, she expressed what appeared to be a shared view,

I have never actually taught kids or in schools, but I am absolutely sure there would be different approaches – topics, material, perhaps more music/cartoons/film, adults have completely different life experiences compared to kids so that's a factor, attention spans are different, also the brain works a little differently; but I cannot speak from experience here.

Similarly, Doris an experienced trainer with a record of 32 years indicated vast differences,

Working with adults gives you the opportunity to make use of their potential and work experience and include it in class or group activities, whereas teaching children is often concentrated on keeping discipline and motivating them. The syllabus is totally different. Teaching Business English cannot be compared with teaching children at school.

These remarks confirm Knowles' (1984) theory of andragogy, that the adult learner has life experiences and is mostly self-directed in learning.

#### 4.2.2 Experiences of teaching unemployed learners

When the trainers were asked to comment on their experiences of teaching unemployed learners, 18 out of the 20 participants interviewed shared the view that unemployed learners are difficult to teach. There was a wide range of complex and difficult issues but there seemed to be commonalities in the existence of differences in the following; personalities, level of education, attitude to learning, reaction to classroom activities, career, motivation, goals and geographical distribution of learners as illustrated in the examples below.

Maria expressed most of the shared views,

I have much more experience teaching the unemployed learner... I find there is a big difference between people from the city and from the countryside, the latter being more interested, willing to work, positive and communicative. Certainly some unemployed learners don't want to be there or would never have attended English classes if not for the PES, but most of them can see that they will still benefit in some way. Some unemployed people are obviously unemployed for a reason – they have forgotten how to learn/study, or never really knew how to....

Likewise, Marilyn who had a short experience teaching this type of learner commented on the differences in class,

My experience in teaching the unemployed is varied. Some of the learners were very motivated as learning the language is foreseen as an opportunity to enhance their lingual skills, which ultimately is of advantage when searching for jobs. This group consists of people who have had good careers or those that aspire to progress in their careers and have a clear indication of the areas that need improvement. However, the less-motivated group ended up in this class by default and would rather have had other options than learning English.

To understand how this particular group of adults learn, the participants were asked to comment on their attitude towards learning.

#### 4.2.3 Unemployed learners' attitude towards learning in the class

Concerning the learners' attitude towards learning, most of the responses from the interviews revealed other aspects not related to willingness to learn or sharing knowledge. Instead, interviewees talked of complex factors that seemed to hinder learning, apart from age and motivation. The overall picture from the data collected indicates that the adult learner especially within the unemployment background may have a purpose for learning either to acquire language skills for work or travel. But because the learners face many challenges, some of them do not have a positive attitude towards learning. Bitu, an interviewee, argues that adults learn better or best when they have a real purpose for learning and when they know they will use this type of language in certain places which is consistent with McGrath's (2009) findings in her research on how adults learn. This argument is similar to the andragogy theory of learning, which suggests that the adult learners need to know why they are learning (Knowles, 1980).

Another suggestion put forward by Bitu is that it is important to acknowledge that the adult learner has,

Previous knowledge and has had different teachers and is expecting to be treated differently. She suggests involving learners in decision-making on learning goals.

10 out of 18 trainers interviewed proposed the use of actual role-play or real life experiences, and motivating practical activities. This also appeared in the literature on theories of adult learning (Belanger, 2011; Rogers, 1969), which seems to fit with the notion of self-directed learning where the adult learner enjoys solving-problem activities (Knowles, 1984).

However, there is also a positive side in teaching the adults, and most interviewees mentioned that they enjoy being able to discuss serious or up-to-date topics (depending on language knowledge). The trainers also acknowledged learning from these life experiences of unemployed learners. To find out how the trainers felt about teaching, I asked them to reflect on what they enjoyed about teaching this target learner, this was to enable me to understand why the trainers were still teaching this group despite the difficulties.

Maria has taught unemployed learners for 10 years and described,

I love when they have that a-ha! Moments when they suddenly remember things they learned years and years ago..... I love when they suddenly discover that learning can be more fun than they remember, when I am told that they never had such fun learning English at school. .... Also, it's nice to have people from all walks of life who bring their own stories and experiences to the classroom.

In almost all the interviews, the interviewees mentioned enjoying the diversity in the adult classroom in terms of professional and cultural background, nationality and age. On the other hand, Zaina like most of the participants, points out that they least enjoy teaching when confronted with problems of discipline, lack of motivation, interest and goal in life.

To understand these issues better, the participants were asked to comment on why they least enjoyed or felt dissatisfied at times when teaching unemployed learners.

#### **4.2.4 Challenges of teaching unemployed learners**

The responses were quite astonishing because the interviewees spoke with such honesty and passion. For me it was a revealing moment about cases of reluctance,



lack of engagement, psychological problems, behavioural and emotional disorders, illiteracy, and age factor.

Consider, Leroy, a trainer with a range of experience who observed that,

This depends very much on the individual student, some were there to go through the motions of being unemployed, others were desperate and dedicated to learning, others were just too distracted by problems in their personal lives and a few of them were so close to retirement they didn't really see why they needed the training.

Table 4.1 illustrates the actual challenges that confront trainers in class. I chose to present a summary of most of the challenges presented in interview 15 because of clarity in the choice of wording and precise descriptions. I also included other remarks from other interviewees; I made no alterations but used the exact words of the interviewees.

**Table 4.1** Challenges of teaching unemployed learners

- |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Disagreements and arguments between students, which need to be resolved.</li><li>• Insecurities from students that leave them very paranoid and defensive. This can lead to emotional reactions or arguments between students.</li><li>• A student arriving at a lesson drunk.</li><li>• Personal problems at home affecting student performance and sometimes becoming very apparent in class, which can affect the whole mood of the classroom in a negative way.</li><li>• Students arriving too tired to really focus. There are various causes in their personal lives.</li><li>• Students getting ill in class or arriving already too sick to study.</li></ul> |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students who refuse to engage or interact with other students or the teacher. Sometimes maliciously and disruptively.</li> <li>• Students who are over opinionated on certain themes and upset others by what they say.</li> <li>• Education level prejudice and ego. Where some students think themselves superior to others merely based on their titles, careers, education or experience.</li> <li>• Comments made by students that can be regarded as racists or prejudiced in some other way like gender, religion, colour, race, class etc.</li> <li>• I have substituted classes that were so unhappy with their courses they were on the verge of rebellion. Mostly because they didn't like the administration of the institution, the course design, their usual teacher or having their teachers or environment changed so often.</li> <li>• Adult students who talk too much and can't recognise when to stop talking even if you keep trying to stop them or the reaction of the other students' frustration should be obvious to them.</li> <li>• Students who don't allow enough time for new courses to settle down and give up too easily as a result. It takes at least one lesson for everything to fall into place and everybody to get used to everything, some students don't allow for this. Leroy</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students who have forgotten to learn/study or never knew how to learn. Maria</li> <li>• Adults find it harder to get into learning mode for not being familiar with learning for many years. Solare</li> <li>• Depending on the 'stage' in their lives. Solare</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Adults with learning disabilities. Beccare</li> <li>• Students who had bad experience in prior learning. Beccare</li> </ul>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Traumatic experience, bad experience in prior schooling. Doris</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Being sent by the Public Employment Service to the course (mentioned in all interviews as a key cause).</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Not being in the course they would have chosen had they been given a (real) choice. Tiffany</li> <li>• Cases of absence and dropout. Sylvia</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Financial and health-related worries.</li> <li>• Never having learnt how to learn.</li> <li>• The realisation that it's much harder to learn new stuff now, as an adult, than it used to and becoming frustrated.</li> <li>• Never having had an experience of education getting them ahead in life before.</li> <li>• Already having an <i>idée fixe</i> of what they're good at and unwillingness to learn new things outside of that box. Tiffany</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Frustration due to difficulty in finding jobs. Marilyn</li> <li>• Lack of self-confidence. Marilyn</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The only real problems are when the job responsibilities get in the way and there are many cancellations and postponements.</li> <li>• Hampering the learners' ability to make progress. Ceebie</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The social background, sometimes people come with certain addictions, sometimes they have psychological problems or sicknesses. Selena</li> </ul>

- Not being familiar with learning for many years
- Fear of making mistakes
- Fear of failure
- Effects of prior learning
- Lack of motivation
- Lack of confidence
- Frustrations of making little progress
- Traumatic experiences at school
- Heading for retirement
- Not being flexible
- Poor concentration
- Difficult background
- Other problems. Kurt

What emerged from the data is that there are numerous and complicated factors that face the trainers in relation to unemployed learners.

On the contrary, there were also arguments for learners, who wanted to learn but also experienced challenges as Maria put it,

Some are so eager to make the most of it that they get frustrated when they make little progress, small steps, and thus stand in their own way. Some of them, long-term unemployed people might have problems concentrating for so long..... The setting was far from ideal, the structure I had to work in was not well thought out at all. Continuous work was impossible with most groups. Frustrating, really. Too much negative energy.

To understand these issues better, I decided to compare employed learners and unemployed learners by interviewing trainers who had taught both types of learners. This brought out a clear difference between the learners.

Ceebie, indicated that the employed learner is,

Quite motivated and approaches the course with a level of dedication and personal responsibility..... as they have specifically chosen the course and are paying for it, has more life experience and contributing to general work ethic, maintain focus and drive.

Similarly, Kurt had worked in the institution before leaving to set up his private school; he noted that employed learners are motivated because they are paying for the course and preparing for the Cambridge type of examination. He insisted that unemployed learners are there because,

They need a paper to collect their unemployment benefits. Honestly, I worked with that group but sometimes I do get some but it seems a waste of money for money and most are unwilling to learn due to many factors. I could collect lots of money but that is not my art, I would rather work with people who are motivated and build the reputation of my school.

In the literature, there is no clear-cut definition of unemployed learners apart from suggestions like long term unemployed, people undergoing rehabilitation after long illness, mothers coming back from maternity leave OECD (2004b) and NSVC Policy (2013). NSVC document just mentioned a few characteristics like having little education and poor concentration but failed to elaborate the reasons for these arguments. There was no mention of school dropout, illiteracy, learning disabilities, behavioural and emotional disorders or disruptive behaviour. Similarly, Pechar and Wroblewski (2012) do not include the ‘unemployed learner’ in their definition of lifelong learning.

NSVC has a variety of courses including English language courses. As a result, I decided to compare unemployed learners in the English class (which was predominantly composed of people with an Austrian background) with the German language class, which was filled, with people of migrant background. My clues were to answer the questions, were the challenges the same? Were they ‘complex’ too?

Comparatively, I interviewed Tiffany who has a wide range of experience in teaching both languages. Her remarks were that unemployed learners with migrant background are motivated to learn for obvious reasons, to find work and be integrated into the Austrian community.

Furthermore, I sought literature to gain further understanding and clarity of ‘dissatisfying and disruptive behaviour’ that had been mentioned in several interviews. Most of the interviewees’ views were consistent with Dobmeier and Moran’s (2008) findings. These researchers were able to define and classify the behaviours; they also compiled a set of guidelines for preventing or managing this kind of behaviour. It was not a comprehensive guide for the unemployment class where some issues are just too complex and need special solutions.

The section below focuses on the learners’ own perception of learning difficulties.

#### **4.2.5 Learners’ own perception of difficulties**

It was important to capture the learners’ voice on the kind of challenges they experienced. Data from the students’ evaluation forms contained valuable descriptions on levels of target class, descriptions of the type of learner, methods of teaching and expectations of the learners. This information strengthened arguments collected from the learners’ questionnaires on issues concerning, 1) Challenges of unemployed adult learners in NSVC, 2) Attitude towards learning, 3) Learners’ perception of quality learning, 4) Learners’ views of a good trainer section and, 5) Adult learners’ need.

#### 4.2.5.1 Challenges of unemployed adult learners in New Star Vocational College

The analysis of students' feedback evaluation forms revealed details of key challenges and difficulties of learning from a learner perspective. The data clearly defines the context of NSVC, type of learner, actual classroom observations, trainer's complicated work and unclear roles. The levels are divided into beginners, intermediate and advanced classes. The classes are made up of heterogeneous groups in terms of origin, age, work experience, education, and gender.

Below are quotations that elaborate on contentious views regarding attitudes towards learning.

Jasmine commented, 'It is challenging being in this type of class with other unemployed adult learners'. She further suggested that

Some of them do not have the right attitude; the majority are there to collect their unemployment benefits. There are profound differences, the younger ones are disinterested and the older ones talk of ageing processes and retirement, so the trainers concentrate on motivating them within a short period 4-6 weeks. So much cannot be achieved because the learners expect the trainers to do everything

The picture painted is that priority is not only placed on providing instructions, but also on focusing on the broader concept of learning, which involves paying special attention to their well-being, motivation, and transformation of the individual to fit in the labour market concept.

Other challenges that emerged illustrate what actually happens in different classes in NSVC, this data gave very clear and detailed descriptions of the target groups, which may not have been obvious within the short period of time. For example, Schneider

an (adult learner) defined some of the challenges in learning and teaching in a beginners' class,

Majority have just attended the compulsory school year or dropped out of school. Many years have past since they attended any kind of training. The majority associate school or any kind of training institutions with bad experience, problems with teachers and other difficulties. Coupled with this kind of background, the learners have difficulties with courses, learning and integrating in groups. They often have difficulties with concentration, while others are too slow in understanding and are less motivated.

The above comments validate the responses collected from the interviews with trainers about their complicated role in teaching unemployed learners and the need for professional training (see table 4.1).

Kerstin (Pre-intermediate class) pointed out the age factor as a barrier in the English class,

Others believe their advanced age is a big barrier in achieving useful learning while the younger ones show less success. Although most of them have had exposure to English in school, they learned little English because they experienced difficulties with complex school system, teachers, or were not well taught during the English lessons. They have short-term control over learning and motivation, and are unable to use the learnt structures in daily language or even to absorb more content, which often leads to lack of personal success and achieving the set learning goals.

The quotation above illustrates the complicated nature of unemployment classes but also gives an insight into real difficulties that need to be addressed in order to improve learning.

Although I was not fully conscious of gender issues and age in the lower levels, Marcel argued that women,

Especially older women seem to integrate themselves in a more difficulty manner than the younger ones. They find it difficult to communicate and are therefore quiet, contribute less in lessons especially in communicative activities. The majority of the women attend English lessons to be able to get a chance in finding jobs in sales and marketing, hotels and office management.



This quotation made me reflect on my own teaching experiences in all the classes and I was able to recall some of them and became aware of how impenetrable and inscrutable some incidents were, but from the learners' perspective I got a deep insight into this reality. I consulted a few trainers to counter-check these remarks. I found out that they had also been perplexed but were willing to find a way to engage this group of learners.

Another observation made in the classes is that migrants seem to be motivated and seem to create a challenge for other unemployed learners with an Austrian background. Fabian (intermediate class) suggests that,

Migrants as a target group often have attended middle or high school in another language. They seem to be successful in learning a new language because they have had successful learning experience or are highly motivated to learn a new language in order to find a job. Secondly, they are able to use the language with more confidence, which can be attributed to having attended many German classes; they seem to be accustomed to the learning methods when compared to their counterparts.

The above quotation echoed what Tiffany (trainer) had stated in her interview about migrants and learning. In contrast, Larissa (intermediate class) demonstrated that the intermediate class depicted a different picture of migrants and Austrians in the upper levels, they all seemed to be motivated unlike in the lower levels,

This target group is characterized by the fact that they have attended many English classes in the past but have not used the language privately and at work. They would like to refresh the language. There is no big difference between the Austrians and the migrants in terms of age, gender, motivation and learning pace. The goal is to use the language at work.

Further, Wolfgang clearly described the advanced class and their drive for learning,

The group requires English in their jobs at a high level in order to communicate fluently. They are highly motivated, fast learners and have a well-trained background in education and career.

The above views are consistent with those voiced and shared by the trainers in the interviews and therefore make stronger the need for additional professional skills for the trainers.

Additionally, I decided to ask the trainers to talk about how they dealt with the difficulties.

#### **4.2.6 Dealing with difficulties**

In coping with challenges, most interviewees mentioned developing their own teaching methods based on experience and observations to suit unemployed learners. Ceebie commented that although he had no practical experience, he had benefitted from online teaching and developing patience.

Selena too realised that being able to adapt by watching videos, reading books and being with students daily had helped her to cope. At the same time, supporting the learners by using translation (German language), helping them, teaching less theory, being a good listener and a good communicator, and tailoring the lessons to fit the needs of the learners. These are some of the mechanisms she had put into place together with having a positive attitude, teaching with enthusiasm and motivation. She had developed this in the seven years she had taught this type of target group. I believe that she could be a good mentor/coach for the beginning trainer and also in building a strong professional development community. She is quite honest to admit that she had no experience or training when she began, 'it was a sort of accident'.

Solare recommends,

Motivating them in a different way and nurturing their confidence first and adding fun in using new knowledge and humour as a skill to open up their minds so they are not scared of new knowledge.

Doris suggests,

Treating them as adult people with a lot of life and /or professional experience not as children/students is the most important thing. Letting them talk about themselves and their problems using the target language as far as possible. Accepting and respecting them with all the diversity but also show them rules for class cooperation if necessary.

The participants' comments fit in with Pratt's (2005) nurturing perspective and Maslow's theory of human motivation (1970), which would enable the learner to connect their personal and academic issues.

Table 4.2 is a summary of 'survival' strategies that trainers have developed in order to cope with the challenges and difficulties of teaching unemployed learners.

**Table 4.2** Other survival strategies mentioned by most trainers

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sharing with colleagues various issues and tips, this fits in with Wenger's theory of communities of practice (1998, 2006)</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Having clear learning goals</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identifying the problem</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Addressing insecurities</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Engaging one-on-one coaching</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Giving constant support</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Talking to individual learners</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Knowing the learners and understanding their situations.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Promoting a conducive learning environment for all learners</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Choosing appropriate topics for adults</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use didactic methods in teaching</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reducing teacher talk</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Providing relevant learning material</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Distributing groups into homogeneous types (jobs, hobbies, interests)</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Doing more practical work</li> </ul>

Although the trainers have developed strategies, a clear picture emerges from this study that during many occasions the trainers often feel helpless in situations where they do not know how to respond to the learners' difficult circumstances, which seem to be beyond their capabilities. A major challenge is the socio-economic background, learning disabilities and emotional instability. Selena, a key informant, calls for training and proper education. The above discussion can be linked to some of the burnout syndromes the trainers experience caused by emotional fatigue.

#### **4.2.7 Needs of unemployed learners**

This section focused on the needs of the learners and their expectations in NSVC, the majority of the adult learners made comments based on prior experience and against the background of their short stay in the institution. The questionnaire responses indicate that the adult learners seem to know what they want and are able to express genuine needs:

- The need for intellectual and specialised knowledge
- Understanding
- Practice
- Time
- A good trainer
- Good teaching
- All-round knowledge
- A certificate.

The assumption in the institution by the majority of the trainers and even the management is that the learners are interested in 'passing time' in order to gain

unemployment benefits. The questionnaire response to the question about their needs contradicts this opinion.

The learners also pointed out other problems related to trainer mobility, enormous differences in qualifications and social skills, inadequate facilities and equipment, lack of opportunity to select relevant courses and prejudiced officials.

The following section focuses on teaching quality.

### **4.3 Research question 2: Perception of teaching quality**

#### **4.3.1 Teaching quality**

In order to fully understand the needs of the learners and trainers, I decided to find out what the stakeholders perceived as teaching quality in relationship with adult education in NSVC.

Teaching quality is presented from the following perspectives:

- Trainers' view of quality teaching
- Learners' view of quality teaching
- Teaching effectively in the unemployment classes
- Managements' view of quality teaching

#### **4.3.2 Trainers' view of quality teaching**

There seem to be similar views in the literature and the interviews done that the concept of quality teaching is rather complex. The interpretations range from efficient classroom management to quality of instructions. Before the interviews, my assumptions were that the trainers would be able to adequately discuss adult

education and quality teaching. Probably suggesting standards, expectations, improvements, and even modifications to suit their work. In reality, after the first 4 interviews, it was evident that the trainers found it difficult to discuss about theory, and were happy to talk about their practical experiences.

From the interview responses, there was no common definition of quality teaching in NSVC but rather varying views. However, there was commonality in a few key issues, for example having adequate knowledge and teaching skills, meeting the learner' needs, and being creative, which fitted with Hemmer's (2014) proposal of quality teaching.

There were also strong suggestions about having sufficient teaching methods to enhance effective learning for unemployed learners. For example, Zaina who had taught for one and half years related quality teaching to,

Using various methods, different materials, being up-to-date, competency (knowledge, didactics).

Solare was concerned with the trainer's human nature, classroom organisation and learning resources. She described quality teaching as,

Having empathy for the students by being able to connect with them and to secure their trust. Creating and supervising group dynamics adding fun to daily chores, and getting as much variety in lessons. I always add new stuff to my teaching equipment. If I have fun doing it, then the group can find it too. So I first make sure that the lesson will be enjoyable for myself and therefore for the class as well.

What emerged is that fulfilling students' needs, letting them be creative and having fun together in improving their language skills are some of the most important tasks of teaching. Some of these views fit with Pratt's (2005) form of commitment in

teaching directed at the learners. There seemed to be a focus on instructional practice, delivery of content and achieving set goals for the lesson. On the other hand, the responses given to this question seemed to conceal the dilemmas of their daily work and painted a picture of a harmonious environment.

I tried to look at the practice of experienced trainers. Adriano studied English and had taught for 10 years. He had also worked at the VHS (‘Volkshochschule’ – Adult Education Centre). He felt that quality teaching is equal to good teaching. In relation to this, Ceebie expressed a very strong opinion that teaching effectively or quality teaching can be summed up into three words: training, preparation and personal confidence. This opinion seemed to be based on his personal professional growth acquired from online teaching and a CELTA course. His statement was resonant with Darling-Hammond’s (1997) and Day (1999) argument that quality teaching can be achieved through good training and by investing in the professional development of teachers.

The above view is reinforced by Selena, a key informant who insists, that quality teaching is determined by trainers having ‘proper’ training at university level and attending vocational classes to gain skills. In this quotation her observation and conviction is that there is a gap because,

In Austria trainer education is not a proper one (ein Trainer Ausbildung) or studies offered in teaching adults.

She is critical of the kind of training that is available and argues that it is too general and inadequate. She calls for effective pedagogical skills that correspond to the

learners' needs. This view almost fits with the definition given by OECD (2012:7) that 'quality teaching is the use of pedagogical techniques to produce learning outcomes for students'. In relation to this, are Goodson and Hargreaves (1996) and Day (1999) who suggested that quality teaching could be enhanced through professional development by focusing on the teachers' subject content, teaching practice and revitalising their self-efficacy.

Other responses corresponded with the literature, which identified quality teaching to include what teachers should know and be able to do as suggested in 1987 by the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS). Berry (2007:14) identified five core propositions that form the foundation of skills knowledge, dispositions and beliefs of effective teachers. The five core propositions are: 1) Teachers are committed to students and learning, 2) Teachers know the subjects they teach and how to teach those subjects to students, 3) Teachers are responsible for managing and monitoring student learning, 4) Teachers think systematically about their practice and learn from experience, and 5) Teachers are members of learning communities.

It was surprising to listen to the interpretations of quality expressed by Annalore, a qualified English teacher and who was in NSVC for a year. Her comments were too generalised, and contradicted responses from other interviews and learners' opinion of the reality, especially when she mentioned the way teaching is done. One can suggest that, either she was ignorant of what was happening around her or had adopted what Leroy referred to as "I must look after myself only" attitude; she had the following to say,



We teach in a very professional way, quality of teaching is on the very high level, but it all depends on the learners sometimes we have to apply our methods to them. If they are willing to learn, our teaching is high quality method and if they are not willing to learn..... Its a kind of interaction between the students and the teachers, if the students are willing to learn then our quality is of high quality because we are professionals and we know what to do.

The remarks show that quality teaching also depends on the willingness of the learner too. Furthermore, she points out, that if there is no cooperation from unemployed learners probably quality teaching is not achieved. This argument links to the previous theme of the challenges of teaching unemployed learners and questions about best practice as in Hammersley (2007). MacGregor (2007) suggested equipping teachers with a common set of 'look fors' in a core list to improve the impact of student learning.

Kurt began teaching in NSVC but left to start his own school, he has experience in teaching both employed/unemployed learners. He holds a managerial position; he argues that he is particular about teaching quality,

I prepare the teaching program with individual trainers, discuss and help to prepare each training kit, I inquire about what each in-training company wishes to have on their program for example if its legal English, I send an expert on that area because the customer pays dearly to have the right services for his money. So, I am particular and work meticulously on such things.

Other comments indicated the need for inspiring confidence in the students and activating their existing language, aiming at increasing their confidence and building on what they already know. The key is to have a holistic picture and then look for impactful and robust measures.

#### 4.3.3 Learners' perception of quality teaching

The responses from the learners' questionnaire indicated that they were aware of what quality teaching meant to them. They were each able to articulate from their own perspectives, what they expected in terms of learning, trainer characteristics and teaching resources within a diversified classroom. The learners' idea of quality teaching was captured in their own words, which were translated and are presented in the table 4.3

**Table 4.3** Learners' perception of quality teaching

Translation	Original language (German)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Make sure that everybody understands during learning</li></ul>	Stellen Sie sicher , dass jeder während Lernen versteht P2
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Understanding</li></ul>	Verständlich P3
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• In order to improve/educate oneself there should be quality training</li></ul>	Zur Verbesserung / erziehen sich selbst sollte es qualitativ hochwertige Ausbildung sein P8
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Training should have quality practice</li></ul>	Die Ausbildung sollte die Qualität der Praxis P9
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Real learning in the course with the use of new technology and current documents</li></ul>	Echt Lernen im Kurs sollte mit der Nutzung neuer Technologien und aktuellen Dokumenten P10

Despite the different levels of knowledge and education, the learners viewed quality as including emotional support, an understanding trainer with social skills, competence, practice, use of learning technology and resources, and being treated equally. For them the time spent in NSVC was about training and preparation to enter the labour market. A few learners did not answer the questionnaire for reasons connected with illiteracy (OECD, 2004a). My colleague who had distributed the

questionnaire suggested this. Additionally, I decided to compare the questionnaire response to the responses from the students' feedback forms about quality teaching. The interconnection between the data was scrutinised and further confirmed what quality teaching meant to the learner.

Section 4.3.3.1 illustrates data from students' evaluation feedback forms

#### **4.3.3.1 Data from the students' evaluation forms on teaching quality**

This data revealed that the learners were able to identify effective teaching strategies that focus on different learning styles as opposed to 'one-size-fits-all model'. They described how each course should begin based on the observations they had made. For example, Johann believed that a good trainer should promote collaboration at the beginning of the course,

Foster the first introductions and see that they are done in small groups or alternatively each individual introduces himself/herself. Then, in two groups, the course aims and rules are presented. Further explanations are given on how learners should behave among themselves and with the trainer. Next, how errors are dealt with is explained as well as how to support each other. Group values during group work and learning should be transmitted while supporting individual learning. For every individual the trainer should adapt a suitable method, which should also be reflected with the group. Learning type tests should be included in the test and in the lessons. In the lessons English should be spoken.

Collaboration establishes a personal connection between learners and also helps them to think in a less personally biased way. Collaborative learning is rooted in Vygotsky's (1997) concept of learning called Zone of Proximal development, the focus is on learning that occurs through communications and interactions but this type of learning could also raise unsolved problems like cultural diversity and lack of awareness of norms, generation gaps, and age difference in collaborating. So, the

trainer has to choose the most appropriate learning theory for particular groups of learners.

The next comment focuses on issues that touch the learners most. The majority of the learners appealed to trainers to use translation, especially when the learners have difficulties in understanding explanations in English, but also argued that repetition of the given structure should be carried out in English. Group themes like conflict and gender issues should be discussed in German. Further, to support students with no learning experiences, repetition of the previous day's work should be done at the beginning of every lesson and if there is need for more practice then the learners can be given more exercises.

Some of the learners felt that certain exercises like gap-fills and completing sentences were too restrictive and failed to enable them to use the vocabulary they had learned. They liked formulating their own sentences while combining with the knowledge they had to produce fluent speech or written work. They wanted trainers to create opportunities to allow the learners to develop speaking fluently, for example through role-play, simple discussions in groups and games.

Other suggestions are illustrated in table 4.4

**Table 4.4** learners' suggestions on improving teaching quality

<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Any remedial work or repeating the course should be discussed with the PC, learner and trainer.</li><li>• The learner can repeat the class if necessary and in case of personal or social problems receive (guidance and counselling), get individual coaching; the trainer should be asked to find special methods to teach the learner. Stefan</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• If progress is not achieved, there should be an assessment or explanation made of what happened, and recommendations are made available for the institution and Public Employment Service. Flora</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Lower levels-should be exposed to communicative activities, role-play and should be encouraged to develop confidence in using the language, grammar and vocabulary creatively. Anita</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Use of special method to teach-reading dialogues, drills, variations of pieces of writing, role-play, use of pictures, music, use of short texts. Leopold</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• From their experience, they believe it is important to structure the course so as to meet individual needs. Beate</li></ul>

Other criticism was directed at the use of learning software provided to the learners. Although the aim is to support further training and self-directed learning (Knowles, 1984), this seemed to produce more difficulties for learners without computer knowledge. What emerges is lack of technological support and learners' lack of technological skills. Natalie (beginners' class) suggested that trainers should introduce computer skills and software during the first week and then assist those who have no knowledge. She further suggested that fast learners could be given more suitable materials and headsets to avoid disturbing or interfering with other

learners. They could also use the Internet to search for jobs, write job application letters, curriculum vitae and print copies of materials they require especially for those with no Internet connection at home

#### **4.3.4 Teaching effectively in unemployment classes**

To understand the perception of trainers' understanding of teaching quality, I asked them to describe what they viewed as characteristics of effective teaching for unemployed learners. Doris expressed a typical view,

Being more a partner in the learning process, supporting students' individual development, and working in pairs or groups rather than being only a lecturer. Understanding students' needs. Being flexible enough to adapt the syllabus to the group. Being a good entertainer, never boring, offering various activities, using multimedia and being flexible enough to change them and forget the lesson plan depending on the groups' mood. Always checking students' faces and responses to see if what they are doing is satisfactory to them.

Some of the above remarks resonated with suggestions in Knowles' andragogical theory of self-directed learning, Rogers' (1983) humanistic approach to learning and Belanger (2011) theory of adult learning, which emphasises the role of the educator as a facilitator, while the learner constructs knowledge and is active in participating. As remarked by Doris the ultimate outcome should be change in the learner, which was also emphasised by Mezirow (1997) a key researcher in transformational learning theory.

In a follow-up interview, Solare insisted on focusing on the special needs of the learners and integrating vocational needs within the foreign language class. She found that it was essential to do a needs analysis of the linguistic abilities of the learners, appreciate different learning styles and different age groups, concentrate on different experiences and use different resources, and above all create a secure

environment and a positive group dynamic. Some of these essential factors mentioned that could bring change in the learner resonant with Mezirow's (1997) transformational learning theory, which bear: the characteristics of the instructor, student, course content, learning environment and instructional activities.

Other responses depicted the trainers' preferences, beliefs and perspectives on teaching. Ceebie's focus is on positive reinforcement and fostering of confidence in the learners' existing skills. Some of these effective theories can also be found in Skinner's (1953) approval of desirable behaviour. Ceebie relates teaching effectively to teaching accuracy and effective communication in attempting to get the learners functional in their real world in a timely and efficient way. On the other hand, most of the interviewees pointed out teaching topical and relevant subjects suited to the student's career, but also linking English learning to hobbies, and also creating an environment that the learners can learn both actively and passively.

At this point the interviewees did not talk about what limitations they had about implementing effective teaching or the kind of institutional support they had in terms of pedagogical practice. I felt that it was important to talk to the management about their interpretation of quality.

The following section outlines the senior managers' views.

#### 4.3.5 Management's view of teaching quality

To compare the response from Kurt with the management, I interviewed 2 managers about their views on teaching quality, which seemed to be problematic and difficult to answer.

Cynthia stated,

(I am sorry I have too little knowledge about this topic). It seems to be a framework, which improves the quality of teaching by answering questions to several topics of teaching. Teachers can scrutinise their teaching methods and exercises. What do I want to achieve and do I really achieve it with my used methods and exercises?

The response appears to cast doubts on the manager's knowledge, and awareness of the kind of teaching and learning framework the trainers should work in. Comparatively, the institutional document NSVC Policy (2013, 2014) was consulted to check the mission statement about the endeavour to improve quality, and what the manager had said. The difference indicated a lack of operational guidance of NSCV objectives, and lack of a monitoring mechanism to control the implementation of the institutions' teaching and learning framework.

There seemed to be a lack of institutional awareness of the teaching strategies stipulated in the document for most trainers. There was an assumption, they should read, understand and implement. The document was written in complex German language, too difficult for many trainers to understand the technical vocabulary, and no effort had been made to induct the trainers. The document was an indication that it had been written by someone who had no pedagogical knowledge, but it had also failed to include the diversified composition of unemployed learners and trainers.



It was essential to understand how the management evaluated the teaching of adults. Cynthia commented that the evaluation was done through the use of feedback forms, which focused on the quality of teaching and the knowledge of the teacher. The involvement of the learners was commendable because it gave them a platform to comment on what worked well and the kind of relevant future improvements. Most of the evaluations forms selected had constructive criticism apart from a few that contained unrealistic demands. Unfortunately, it was done at the end of the course, seemingly too late to make adjustment for the group. Improvements were considered if there were complaints from the learners and the social partners concerning trainers.

I had mixed feelings about the role of the management and implementation of the institutions' policy mission, development of learner programmes, leadership qualities and accountability, support policy and reaction to challenges. I cannot say whether I felt disappointed at the managements' lack of understanding the core values of quality teaching. I was not sure whether I could attribute this to negligence or being overwhelmed by responsibilities, so that they had ended up sacrificing the quality of teaching. It was not easy to determine whether that was a tactic not to 'penetrate the fronts'. This could be summed up as pointed out in OECD (2012:13),

That not all actors consider quality teaching a priority, understand and recognise what constitutes quality teaching or are willing and able to play a role in ensuring it takes place in their institutions.

What clearly emerged from the study is that there was a clear role played by the managers in the recruitment and selection of trainers, and that they were aware of the

limited pedagogical expertise of their trainers despite having qualifications in other areas.

Secondly, Cynthia who had a managerial role had suggested that ‘teachers can scrutinise their teaching methods and exercises’, an expectation that the trainers should do reflective practice (Schön, 1983, Rogers, 1983; Day, 1999; Hammersley 2007). This seemed to be a good idea, only if the trainers were aware of the pedagogical competencies, and knew how to operate within the challenging context of unemployed learners. One could detect a disconnection of collaborative practice as in Wenger’s (1998) community of practice, and a break down of communication, suggesting that the managerial level operated entirely on its own with the assumption that the trainers were capable and could handle any situation independently to the satisfaction of the institution.

In comparison, Sylvia who had managerial experience was asked to comment if she thought the trainers had difficulties teaching the learners. She recounted a few examples to show that there were challenges. When asked to say how well the trainers were equipped to teach unemployed learners. She hesitated and said, that it was a very difficult question to answer. On the other hand, she was able to suggest the kind of changes she would like to see,

I would make small organisational units out of it and not centralised like it is without a clear contact person. Clarity is important. I would create an in between level. What else, what else? I do not know. In our location things were fine. A workers council to support the workers would be good. One that is independent from the management. ....I would like to have better opportunities for further training. We only got some crumbs but not really anything reasonable. New training and products to sell are some of the changes I would have liked to see.

From the literature this notion of quality teaching is quite challenging and there is no consensus on the actual meaning, some of the participants seemed to talk about ideal concepts of quality teaching but all the participants associated quality teaching with a ‘good’ trainer.

The next section looks at the qualities of a good trainer.

#### **4.4 Qualities of a good trainer**

Most learners related good learning with a good trainer. I therefore decided to ask the participants about how they conceptualise the chief qualities and characteristics of a good trainer, and to identify a trainer they most admire.

##### **4.4.1 The learners’ view of a good trainer**

However, most of the learners were not be able to define the qualities of a good trainer as it appeared in the literature by Hodgman (2012) and Rowe (2003). They were able to associate teaching quality with good experiences of learning linked closely to the qualities of a good teacher. The unemployed learners’ responses in both the questionnaires and student feedback forms seemed to be consistent with findings in Looney (2011), which indicate that teacher quality is the most important factor affecting student achievement. This is related to the adult learners’ perception of learning and having fun in the classroom.

There was no evidence on what basis the learners used to identify the qualities of a good teacher. However, most of the qualities they identified corresponded with Strong’s (2011) comprehensive definition of teacher quality. Which could be

attributed to the diversified nature of the class: in terms of different levels of education, age and ability. Their responses were quite subjective and based on personal experiences, mostly going back into the past. The majority of the learners were attending the short courses for the first time but a small number had been to the institution several times.

Table 4.5 shows how the adult learners responded to the question regarding the characteristic of a good trainer and what their expectations are as they come to the institution.

**Table 4.5** Characteristics of a good trainer

Translation	Original Language (German)
Subject competence, humour, experience, empathy/intuition P1	Fachkompetenz, Humor, Erfahrung, Empathie und Einfühlungsgabe P1
Having fun in the lesson P2	Spaß am Unterricht P2
Fun while learning P3	Spaß beim Lernen (Unterrichten)P3
Competence P4	Kompetenz P4
Good understanding, patience, exciting course presentation or design P6	Gutes Verständnis, Geduld, spannende Kurs Präsentation oder Design P6
Human, full of suspense, content is interesting P7	Menschlich, voller Spannung, Inhalt ist interessant P7
One that is open friendly, competent in all questions, explaining and presenting	Eines, das ist offen und freundlich, ist kompetent in allen Fragen , erklären und

even the most difficult content, treating all the learner in an equal manner, answers all questions and even taking them seriously P8	auch die schwierigsten Inhalte präsentieren , die alle den Lernenden in gleicher Weise zu behandeln, beantwortet alle Fragen und auch sie ernst zu nehmen P8
Speaks fluently, choice of interesting learning materials and responding to the group needs P9	Freies reden, Auswahl an interessant Lehrstoff , auf die Gruppe Eingehen P9
Good and understandable lesson, use of adequate examples, include current topics from the media, group- work, motivating the group P10	Gut und verständlich Lektion vortragen, Verwendung geeigneter Beispiele, Aktuelle Themen aus den Medien mit einbeziehen, Gruppenarbeiten machen, Motivierend sein für die Gruppe P10

Whereas the above responses may have been based on their experiences or ideal notions of a good trainer remain unanswered because I was unable to make a follow up of the learners as they were in NSVC for a short period of time (4-8 weeks). It is clear that subject knowledge, emotional and social skills, motivation, fluent communication, a friendly personality, choice of learning materials and mode of presentation seem to be very important to the learners.

#### 4.4.1.1 Quotations from students' evaluation forms on trainer qualities

The quotations below illuminate the students' voice on the qualities they like in trainers. Some learners were able to describe trainers who had left a positive impression on them despite the many complex tasks. Verena (advanced English Business class) felt that,

I never had the impression that they were just honoring a contract. Our concerns were looked into, and we were informed of our own obligation and also got support in all areas. This assistance took the form of encouragement, advice, updating our curriculum vitae, pointing out job opportunities, recommending and urging us to look at new career platforms, exemplifying the reality of the labour market. We got the initiative to tackle real case studies in groups, which enabled us to vigorously find alternative solutions. It was useful to share our different experiences in the group, and we even knew that after the course we had established a small class network to collaborate on common issues. The trainer's advice and enthusiasm that she considered it as an essential personal duty to reach out and guide people in this type of unique circumstances, steered us all to realize that this course had boosted and revitalized us, it was a marvelous and genuine support while we were jobless.

Jemima (intermediate Business Class) described her observation on key qualities displayed by trainers in NSVC,

Our trainers are highly committed and knowledgeable people who try to teach us. Special attention is also paid to slow learners without interfering with the rest of the class. Support is given in one-to-one instruction although time is limited. Learning material is constantly revised in exercises and tests. The trainers really motivate us and vouch for our ability to pass the exams and have the chance to start a new career. Empathy and humanity are felt. I am completely sure that I speak on behalf of 18 members of the intermediate business course when I mean that we were accorded great effort and attention.

The above remarks show the trainers' commitment to make learning experiences valuable and to meet the needs of unemployed learners. The trainers are painted as facilitating good practice.

Finally, the data provided by unemployed learners demonstrated significant differences in classroom experiences, level of groups, expectations and characteristics of trainers. But they all shared a common view on challenges and need for trainers to use effective teaching strategies with a measure on different

learning styles. It is important to illuminate the changing context in terms of the educational needs of different learners and yearly programmes designed to meet the requirements of each target group, which means that there are changes on subjects, topics and learning goals.

#### **4.4.2 Trainers' views of a good teacher**

Correspondingly, the learners' remarks were compared with those of the trainers' and in fact I found that there were similarities in most issues despite the language variations. The majority of the comments indicated that personality, subject knowledge, social, emotional and professional skills were important.

For example, Maria an experienced trainer had worked for 10 years teaching English to adults, mostly unemployed people but also people in VHS (Volkshochschule – Adult Education Centre), and private lessons (conversation, mainly). Her comments are typical of what a good teacher should possess,

Patience, patience and more patience, and a sense of humour. Creativity. An outgoing personality and a voice that carries beyond an arm's length. Empathy. It's helpful if the person is also a learner of something – otherwise teachers tend to forget how hard it can be. Obviously also solid knowledge of whatever they are teaching. The ability to explain things in simple words and in more than just one way.

Similarly, Adriano who studied English, and worked at the VHS (Volkshochschule – Adult Education Centre) indicates that authenticity, experience and good skills are essential in teaching unemployed people coupled with good preparation.

While Solare who has been teaching for about 20 years insists,

Being passionate about their field, interested in learning as in teaching, being open-minded, interested in wide area of knowledge beyond teaching, being interested in people, being able

to balance knowledge and wisdom, having a positive attitude, staying humble and being prepared to learn from every student and never stop learning.

Some of the quotations reinforce the need to continue learning. To be clear about the qualities mentioned of a good trainer, I decided to ask the question, what qualities would they look for if they were to appoint a new trainer.

Beccare, expressed typical remarks, although she had been teaching for 2,5 years, she acknowledged her lack of experience in teaching adults but suggested that a good trainer should have,

A dynamic personality, someone with excellent command of the language, friendly, open and has a genuine interest in helping others. Be professional, get to know your students and try to have genuine interest in their success.

It was important that I listen to the management's point of view, as they were concerned with the recruitment and selection of the trainers.

#### **4.4.3 Managements' view of a good trainer**

There were contradictory statements in the philosophy of NSVC in relation to qualities of a good trainer. Cynthia, an experienced Project coordinator with many years of teaching unemployed learners had the following to say,

This new teacher should have a good professional education and some experience in teaching. She/he should be an extroverted, active, motivated and humorous person. Someone I like to talk with, and give me a feeling of equivalence and worth.

In addition, Sylvia had experience in managerial duties and was involved in supporting the learners to find jobs and sometimes acted as a substitute trainer. She commented that there were people who lacked the technical knowledge but believed through training/practice, they could acquire proper concepts and skills. On the



contrary, she strongly believed that the situation also depended on the trainers' personality.

To be sure, the managers' comments and the institution's document (NSVC policy 2013, 2014) on recruitment and selection of trainers were compared to the advertisement section, which revealed a further contradiction. The advertisement section seemed to reflect high standards coupled with the need for high qualifications and experience in teaching. The enormous difference between the two documents reinforced the need to find suitable ways of assisting the trainers to develop themselves.

With the above in mind, I reflected on the details in Day (1999), Hustler et al. (2003) and Guskey (2002) about developing the trainer in adult education learning. In relation, some aspects of professionalism coupled with skills and knowledge were analysed in this particular setting. To understand the kind of skills the trainers' possessed, I decided to ask the question, what are the skills you have developed while teaching unemployed learners? I felt that this would enable me to find out precisely what the trainers were lacking in dealing with the difficulties, and also what they would improve on and how they could do it.

**4.5 Research question 3: How can trainers be helped to enhance their professional skills to teach unemployed adult learners in New Star Vocational College, Austria?**

**4.5.1 Professional skills developed while teaching the unemployed adult learner**

Most of the responses concerning the skills identified included a high demand of understanding and emotional support in terms of empathy, compassion and interpersonal skills.

The list below illustrates the kind of skills developed during their teaching career in order to cope with the challenges mentioned by most trainers.

- Development of patience
- Understanding, respect and flexibility
- Empathy and compassion
- Support of learners and use of translation
- Good listener and communicator
- Improvisation
- Positive attitude
- Motivation
- Sense of humour

The skills above were consistent with the responses of the learners but there was a clear demand by unemployed learners to be treated equally.

Leroy, a trainer with a wide range of experience stated that he had developed the following skills,

I have developed my interpersonal skills, my improvisation skills and my material making skills mostly for my company courses. I need these skills because I teach at many locations and businesses, at many different levels of English (A to C) and many different types of English (General, Technical, Business, Medical) without any real syllabus, course book or pre-defined structure.

Similarly, Solare an experienced trainer reflected on the professional skills that she had developed,

Being able to make every unit different, learning how to create a group dynamic, developing skills like empathy, compassion was essential much more than getting new knowledge (sometimes understanding their situation and empathising was very important then even new skills).... using creativity to make different a difference, exciting and new.

Other remarks, by Tiffany who had taught both German and English language to mostly unemployed people with an immigrant background, indicated that these learners were motivated but had similar challenges like other groups. She had developed the following skills and her advise to trainers was:

- 1) Don't talk too much. Let them be active.
- 2) Be present and transparent as a person. That usually creates a very good atmosphere and opens up channels of communication.
- 3) Try to limit explanations to the task currently at hand. Most people don't want more than that.
- 4) Laugh. Create laughter in the classroom, share the little moments, and let everybody feel everybody else's humanity.
- 5) Draw a clear line between when I'm available and when I'm not: Leave the classroom during break time. Anything else leaves me drained and dry.

Tiffany's remarks are linked to the idea of learner-centred focus that was found in most of the literature about adult learning (Rogers, 1983; Knowles, 1984; Belanger, 2011). The theory is that the students' voice is central and plays an active role in determining their learning, so that the teacher is more of a facilitator.

The following section is about improving skills through Continuing professional development to gain additional skills.

#### **4.6 Improving professional skills through CPD**

The necessity to improve by developing additional skills to teach unemployed learners is not about a presentation of the right way to teach or a demonstration of ideal descriptions. Instead it outlines the observations of the trainers and learners to take note of strategies and approaches that seem to have worked and could become beneficial to this setting. The following sections explain:

- 1) Need for improvement and professional skills
- 2) Need to prepare professionally
- 3) Trainers experiences at the beginning of their teaching career
- 4) Activities and desired continuous development models

##### **4.6.1 Need for improvement and additional professional skills**

All the interviewees mentioned the need for improvement and additional professional skills. I included comments that related to the trainers' interpretation of supporting the learners in terms of building motivation, understanding different abilities and emotional state, cognitive skills, interpersonal, social and employability skills.

As result of the complex nature of the learners, there was an emphasis on 'empathy' in the interview responses and even in the questionnaire, which revealed the crucial needs of the learners. Day (1999) referred to this as emotional intelligence, which is

useful in a classroom organisation. Apart from the subject content, there was need for specialised knowledge to enable the trainer to identify and deal with inappropriate and non-participative behaviour. It was necessary as most trainers had little or no experience in these matters. The majority proposed continuing professional development as a channel to tackle some of these obstacles that hindered learning. NIACE (2011:25) suggested that,

Practitioners delivering skills provision for unemployed adults might benefit, from additional continuing professional development (CPD) to enable them to support employers and other stakeholders to work to best practices in equality, diversity and inclusion.

Like most participants' responses, the literature, also pointed out that the greatest difficulty facing the trainers today is that there is no adequate training focusing on the trainers of unemployed learners (Schneeberger, 2006; Lassnigg, 2011). Beccare an interviewee honestly accepted her current status and was quick to point out, her lack of training, as she puts it 'my training is real-world experience (self-taught)'. She seemed to echo Selena who argued that everything she knew; she had learned by herself. Learning from experience alone is not enough as argued by Day (1999), this view is linked to the responses from the interviews that indicated a highly diversified learner population in terms of age, motivation, abilities, background and needs, and the kind of challenges experienced by almost all the trainers.

Table 4.6 shows the kind of skills the trainers identified to enhance the quality of teaching for unemployed learners.

**Table 4.6** Summary of necessary skills needed to teach unemployed people

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Know your teaching techniques! Great knowledge is (almost) useless if you don't know how to efficiently and interactively pass it on to a group</li> <li>• Classroom management</li> <li>• Flexibility in dealing with people from different backgrounds, nationalities, mentalities</li> <li>• Empathy! Everybody's got their story, and we have to respect them all (for our own and our participants' sake).</li> <li>• Learn how to get feedback from colleagues and get access to innovations in your field even though the institution you're working for may not necessarily encourage that... Tiffany</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Explaining in simple words, language grading, finding suitable exercises, adapting exercises, soft skills too, and quite possibly dozens more.</li> <li>• Anticipating questions/problems. Maria</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Confidence in what we do is good and beneficial/ organisational skills/ communicative skills/ body language. Zaina</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Interpersonal, listening, presentation and organisational skills, good time management, multimedia use. Doris</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Active-listening to students' needs</li> <li>• Contextualised teaching</li> <li>• Interpersonal skills. Marilyn</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Empathy, creativity and good communication skills and having a positive attitude. Solare</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Learning more about different learning types and how to include it in a group setting</li> </ul>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To be better organised. Solare</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Good people skills</li> <li>• Empathy and sympathy</li> <li>• Patience</li> <li>• Good planning skills and time pacing skills</li> <li>• Improvisation skills (if there is a sudden change of plan or situation)</li> <li>• Good record keeping and note keeping (to keep track of work and students as well as to provide suitable information for any substitute teachers who may have to take your class)</li> <li>• Confidence - which comes from knowing your goals and being prepared for each lesson. Leroy</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Psychological knowledge especially in motivation, personality and learning styles. Cynthia</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Motivate the students</li> <li>• Do not be too strict with adults, otherwise you will get some problems; remember you are not in a school</li> <li>• Be friendly as possible</li> <li>• Teach your subject in a way they will understand without problems</li> <li>• Take into account that people have problems and may not have time for learning</li> <li>• Be tolerant (very important aspect). Annalore</li> </ul>

There was a wide range of additional skills needed but the following were severally repeated ‘empathy’, ‘patience’, ‘flexibility’, ‘psychological knowledge and ‘efficiency’. Similarly, the learners’ responses reflected the kind of skills their trainers should possess. They felt that apart from the trainers possessing subject

expertise, they needed to be passionate about their work. The following words were repeated ‘sense of humour’, ‘tolerance’, ‘friendliness’ and ‘good understanding’. Other skills mentioned were the need to maintain the learners’ interest, and being able to respond to diverse groups needs.

Other needs included gaining additional qualifications in English. Kurt argued for social skills, an educational background, pedagogical skills or degree in education, gender and diversity, and additional skills to teach unemployed people. This is echoed in Day (1999:3), who quoted Eraut et al. (1998) that,

It is important for people to recognise the need for additional knowledge or skills that seem essential for improving the quality of their work. This can be fostered through formal training but also learning from experience and other people at work.

Most of the findings from the interviews about the kind of professional skills needed, were consistent with the proposals found in the literature on teacher preparation (Day, 1999; Hollins, 2011; Darling-Hammond, 2006; Darling-Hammond and Bransford, 2006). Which shows that teaching is a complex process that requires the teacher to have a deep knowledge of teaching and learning, the ability to integrate and apply this type of knowledge to a diverse group of learners in different conditions and circumstances. These scholars argue that the essential knowledge, skills and understanding should include,

- Knowledge of the learners
- Deep understanding of learning process
- Subject matter
- Pedagogy
- Accountability and assessment



In the context of unemployed learners, knowledge of the learners seemed to have been illuminated by all the interviewees. Hollins (2011: 397) suggested that,

It is important to understand or have knowledge on human growth, development, individual and group differences combined with specific knowledge of learners in terms of background, experiences, what they know and what they value to inform the design of learning and how learning can be facilitated.

She further argued that knowing the learners should incorporate knowing them as individuals and as social beings in a cultural context. Being aware that they are born with certain characteristics, and secondly understanding that these learners are at a particular stage in their lives, within the academic, emotional, psychological and social development. These arguments corresponded with the findings in my study and some theories of adult learning.

Additionally, Tiffany called for trainers to know their teaching techniques in order to efficiently focus on the learners' demands. This aspect is also found in the literature on teacher preparation, which highlighted the need for a deep understanding and organising of learning processes, linking disciplinary knowledge to the daily routine of learners within a diversified cultural and linguistic context. Some of the interviewees identified the need to develop or possess pedagogical skills similar to Lampert and Graziani's (2009), which should meet the standard, integrity and trustworthiness of a focused group of students.

Literature on theories of adult learning identified andragogical skills as being suitable. In further developments, Knowles (1998) supported the interchangeable use of the 2 approaches (pedagogical and andragogical), depending on the needs of the learners and the goals of the teacher. This argument fitted with Maria's opinions that

lots of methods and little tricks that help children can still apply to adults, for example colours and images.

There was also a need for personal improvements. Andariano who had 10 years of experience, indicated that of importance to him was learning how to be self-confident in lesson planning and structuring of ideas, and learning how to cope with unemployed learners through acquiring additional education or courses, and also doing peer teaching. There was also need to learn different teaching methods by getting opportunity to attend courses, which should be of high standards. This resonated with Day's (1999:3) argument that 'teachers can only be able to fulfil their educational purposes if they are well prepared, able to maintain and improve through life long learning'.

#### **4.6.2 Need to prepare professionally**

The need to prepare professionally emerged from the trainers' responses. This was linked to the difficult circumstances and the need to 'survive' as competent teachers who could react to challenging behaviour and 'critical incidents'. For example, Ceebie believed that he would be a much better trainer if he spent time preparing his lessons. While Maria stated that being prepared was linked to language grading and anticipation of potential questions or problems in the classroom but on the other hand insisted that this came with experience. She warned that, for these particular classes, it was wise not try to do too much.

During the interviews, the participants did not mention issues to do with their payment. But there was a general consensus that the trainers were not paid for preparation time but just the actual teaching hours. This was an issue to be forwarded

to the decision-makers as some of the drawbacks that hampered the trainers' morale and caused dissatisfaction.

The following section demonstrates the experiences of the interviewees at the beginning of their career as trainers.

#### **4.6.3 Trainers' experiences at the beginning of their teaching career**

Trainers were asked to comment on the kind of training they had received to teach unemployed learners or what they had done to supplement lack of training. The responses described very personal experiences of their 'humble beginnings'. This triggered the need for me to contact trainers who had been in the institution at its inception to understand how things had begun. It was important to validate some recurring comments made by most of the trainers. Thomas 4 made a typical remark in his role as a trainer and now a trainer of trainers in the CELTA courses, of how he began at New Star Vocational College,

I was told loosely the course objectives and then they let me get on with it.

The remark was a reflection of what happens after trainers have been recruited. The comparison can be made with what was directly mentioned in other interviews.

Leroy has been teaching now for about 8 years and had shared remarks,

I began with and still work doing company courses, I can honestly say I received no pre-training from my company. At the beginning it was a case of "Here is a company, off you go!"

This made the onset into my teaching career very difficult as I had no material, no major experience, no real mission brief, no colleagues I knew of and one of the companies I was given was already angry at losing their last 2 teachers and now having to have a new third. They let their feelings be known when they completed their feedback forms, which was not very good for the company or for me.

Similarly, Selena (02/11/2014) stated,

I started by accident. It means I was not prepared to do it. I just started and learned what I now know but nobody actually ever told me anything.

In comparison, Beccare (2015) dramatically described how she begun 'I fell in teaching'. This is an indication that most trainers find themselves in an ill-informed occupation and then discover that they are struggling to do their duties. After listening to the trainers, I decided to find out from the most experienced, the kind of advice they would give to a new trainer. I followed up this question, by asking how a new trainer of adults could be helped to develop professional skills during their teaching career.

There were several common shared suggestions on how the trainers of unemployed learners could manage during the beginning of their career, typical remarks by Leroy were summarised in table 4.7. It contains genuine and practical facts that can be recommended to any beginning trainer and even managers because it is based on real scenarios and experiences.

**Table 4.7** Advise for beginning trainers

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A more gradual move into the classroom. Maybe new teachers could take a class one day a week. Or share with an existing teacher one day a week for a short time.</li> <li>• Better support from the administration, although not technically training, this is still very important.</li> <li>• Better introduction and bonding events with the existing teachers and administration staff. It makes you feel like you are part of a team and allows you to know people that could help you and give you advice.</li> <li>• Better induction for the location - tour of the facilities, safety procedures, administration processes explained, staff facilities, classroom equipment explained etc.</li> <li>• Discussions in groups about how to behave under certain classroom events and best solve any problems (scenario based). For example "What should you do if one of your students is drunk?"</li> <li>• Better training on how to make lesson material and where to look for useful sources.</li> <li>• Giving new teachers groups that are not demanding or likely to be over critical. Leroy</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• By teaching supervised classes and regular feedback sessions about those! Tiffany</li> </ul>

It was also important to hear the trainers' opinion on selecting their own CPD activities as advised by Cordingley et al. (2003), which could have substantial improvement in their own context.

#### 4.7 Activities and desired CPD Models

The stakeholders were then asked to suggest concrete needs that related to their daily work that would be the focus in CPD. When asked about the kind of curriculum that would be suitable for CPD, the majority argued for the need to include in their discussion certain possible problem areas in their training (effective learning

methods, unmotivated students, disruptive behaviour and how to integrate people from all walks of life). Tiffany argued for flexibility and openness towards the needs of any given particular group of learners. The need to have a big “tool box” of possible tasks, activities, exercises that can be picked out, for working with a group or an individual that they are useful for.

Some of the key areas that could lead to improvements in teaching and learning are summarised in table 4.8

**Table 4.8.** Key areas identified that could enhance teaching quality through CPD

Areas	Stakeholders
Support for learners with special needs	Trainers
Development of relevant and appropriate knowledge	Trainers/Learners/Management
Proper lesson planning	Trainers
Managing challenging behaviour	Trainers/Management
Building self-confidence and motivation	Trainers
Approachability regarding problems with students	Trainers
Teaching different learning styles	Trainers
Developing competence	Learners/Trainers
Need for emotional support	Learners
Good communication and social skills	Trainers/Learners
Developing teaching and learning materials for practicing trainers	Trainers/Management

To achieve the above needs identified, learners and trainers were asked to comment on the kind of CPD that would be suitable for them. They did not hesitate, and

seemed to be familiar with the notion of CPD. They suggested several ways in which it could be achieved. See table 4.9 below.

**Table 4.9** Suggestions for continuing professional development models

• Attending conferences/seminars
• Reading/researching on your own
• Observing fellow teachers
• Regular teaching under supervision from trainers and colleagues before and during the job, with detailed and frank feedback sessions afterwards.
• Workshops and team teaching, discussing and evaluating how certain students behave in certain lessons and having in-training
• Teaching practice
• It is important to have access to some form of common teacher network and social group where all teachers can go to talk, share ideas and problems, search a library of materials and see what additional opportunities, courses and resources are available to them. As this is missing at times and especially for company course teachers, many teachers are not aware of all the possibilities, advice and guidance that can be available to them.
• Community of practice/Professional learning community

Most of the CPD models mentioned in the table were also found in the literature read. Cordingley et al.'s (2003) argument shows that evidence of common features of CPD includes a variety of models. So the models of CPD suggested by trainers seemed to be consistent with Lieberman's (1996) cited in Rose and Reynolds (2009: 219) who classified CPD in 3 types:

- 1) Direct teaching (courses, workshop)

- 2) Learning in school (such as peer coaching, critical friendship, mentoring, action research and task-related, and planning teams)
- 3) Out of school learning (learning networks, visits to other schools, school university partnership)

Even though Rose and Reynolds (2009) criticised direct teaching as being a traditional perception of CPD, in the case of the trainers, it would be suitable for them to develop the skills they need to overcome the challenges. Leroy argued that the danger for many teachers was not 'being aware of all the possibilities, advice and guidance that can be available to them'. More importantly, teachers can get together and talk openly, freely and informally about teaching and anything else connected to teaching. Sharing experience as in Wenger's community of practice (1998) with colleagues is a very healthy way of dealing with issues but also sharing positive results as well. These arguments appeared in the literature on CPD (Livneh and Livneh 1999; Cordingley et al., 2003).

Peer support seemed to be very important as commented by Leroy, because sometimes there tends to be,

"I must look after myself only" attitude from some people teaching here, so important information can be kept secret by some people for their benefit alone, but thankfully most people are not like this.

Some of the above arguments can be found in Darling-Hammond et al. (2009:3) who suggested a systematic approach where the teachers engage in 'learning continually, collaboratively and on the job to address common problems and crucial challenges'. The call is for a more planned and regular teacher teaching teams that include learning experiences with focused lesson plans to meet the learners' needs. Some of the goals they identified appeared in the learners and trainers' responses.



The benefits of collaborative CPD have been well documented in literature. Cordingley et al. (2003:222) show that collaboration over sometime has been known to lead to ‘teacher improved self-efficacy, greater teacher confidence, openness to ideas, changing practice, willingness to observe, and providing opportunity for when teachers have problems’. These changes in teacher’ behaviours were also reported in the research by Bolam and Weindling (2006).

Tiffany insisted that it was ‘essential to learn how to get feedback from colleagues, and to get access to innovations in ones field even though the institution one is working for may not necessarily encourage that’. Most interviewees also talked of the importance of receiving feedback from the learners. They seemed to value it so much and were able to recall the most positive instances, which they referred to as satisfying moments when teaching the adult learners. Doris remarked from her observations, when covering for a colleague “Your students are lucky to have you, you are such a good trainer”. Feedback like that keeps the trainers motivated and excited about the job.

The above remarks resonated with Bolam and Weindling’s (2006) research, which indicated the impact of collaborative CPD reported in the positive outcomes for students. The report concentrated on measured student performance in terms of enhanced motivation, enhanced reading fluency, positive response to specific subjects, better organisation of work and development of a wider range of learning activities and teaching strategies.

Although most participants recognised the positive outcomes of CPD and the need to implement it, Maria warned,

Certainly, if done in an effective way. And it can be hard to train a trainer, that’s no secret.

Other remarks were about the age factor and career stage. Doris believed that after 32 years of teaching, she had had enough time to improve and therefore did not see any benefits. Ceebie felt the same way,

There is not anything specifically that I would like to improve on as I have reached a comfortable level of skill and there is not a higher level for me to reach that would bring me more money where I am currently located.

These variations and contradictions were consistent with findings on teachers' perceptions of CPD by Hustler et al. (2003).

Another issue that arose was how to sustain CPD in an atmosphere where trainers come and go. Bitu suggested continuous learning,

If a trainer stops learning and does not continue learning, the students will stop learning, the trainer should keep upgrading by going to seminars, taking courses to keep up with the times, researchers are finding new methods and ways of helping students.....teachers should keep on learning and keep abreast with these things, so that they become better and better and improve.

Her recommendation is that the trainer should become a life long learner to fit to the changing times in teaching and learning needs of education.

The following theme arose from a sub-category of improvements in the question, in order to improve what kind of support do you expect from the management?

#### **4.8 Change in the organisation and administration**

The need for change in the management emerged quite early in phase 1 of data collection and continued to develop throughout the interviews. The following are keys issues discussed in this section.

- 1) Managements' lack of support
- 2) Trainers call for change
- 3) Managements' need for change

#### 4.8.1 Managements' lack of support

Findings from all the interviews and data from the student feedback forms exposed the managements' lack of support in teaching and learning, and also revealed the complexity of leading and managing the institution. Annelore claimed that there was a discrepancy between the planned goals and the actual performance of the management. This did not seem to encourage an effective and efficient system.

Table 4.10 illustrates the criticism directed at the management.

**Table 4.10** Criticism of the management

Lack of transparency and accountability
Lack of middle management
Lack of an induction system and poor retention of trainers
Weak trainer development offers
Learners challenges and disruptive behaviour
Vague descriptions of target group and high learner dropout rate

A follow-up interview was carried out, of the above-mentioned issues, which concurred with what most of the trainers had pointed out in the following areas during our interactions:

- Major problems concerning conflicting interests between trainers and the management
- Subjective opinion of the management
- Poor communication
- Inadequate policies

- Trainers do not have a clear job description, they are overloaded, given administrative work and career development lessons, which do not match with teaching English (mostly done in German language, which is a big dilemma for many trainers often leading to learner dissatisfaction).

I talked to Sylvia and Cynthia as managers to shed light on the issues. Sylvia remarked that ‘It is a difficult question to answer because it is an area where many people begin or become trainers.’ Her response seemed not to have yielded adequate information. For clarity purposes, Thomas who had contributed to the English course right from the beginning was approached and he argued that

New Star Vocational College does not fulfil the role of an institution in terms of teacher development/collegiality/career development.

He was able to show the contradictions that exist. At this point, I went back to the literature on adult education and looked at similar institutions in Austria. What emerged is that, most of the institutions are agencies that are contracted to provide services and therefore concentrate more on winning contracts and getting more customers than the professional development of their trainers (Schneeberger, 2006; Lassnigg, 2011).

Thomas pointed out the most compelling evidence that indicated how the management was not,

Involved in what we actually did and did not have any qualified staff in the area.

Thomas like most trainers had experienced that many institutions provided the administrative/physical resources, but were hardly involved in what the trainers did

in the classroom. This concurred with findings from literature Lassnigg (2011) and New Star Vocational College policy (2013, 2014). The actual recruitment processes failed to focus on relevant qualifications for teaching the adult learner, even though the trainers were highly qualified in other areas, as seen in the interview responses about their background and experience in teaching adults.

Criticism was also expressed about the managements' lack of providing opportunities or incentives for trainers to develop adequate teaching skills. In the questions, what kind of skills have you received specifically to teach adults? How have you supplemented? 13 out of the 20 participants interviewed had made no effort due to expenses and lack of time. Here is a typical response from Beccare,

My training is real-world experience (self-taught).  
I haven't supplemented that training in any way yet.

Only 2 trainers had attended Certificate of English Teaching to Adult Learners (CELTA) while 2 trainers had received general training. Both these trainings had nothing to do with unemployed learners.

Other issues overlooked focused on lack of a monitoring system, Marilyn revealed that the majority of the trainers had poor teaching skills according to recent learners' complaint. She concluded the following:

- 1) The managers are not effective and do not perform according to the changes going on in the organisation, or even the policy demands
- 2) The managers seem to concentrate on protecting their jobs, and any criticism is taken as a threat
- 3) The managers are not aware of the undesirable work habits of some trainers

- 4) Trainers who strive to do good work are not promoted or praised

Claims 1, 2 and 4 were consistent with some of the interview responses while claim 3 was found in the analysis of the student feedback forms. For clarification purposes 2 managers were re-interviewed and data compared with New Star Vocational College documents (emails, minutes of meetings, project plan, lesson plans, student feedback forms). Cynthia, a senior manager had the responsibilities described in the diagram below Figure 4.1

**Figure 4.1** senior managers' duties in NSVC

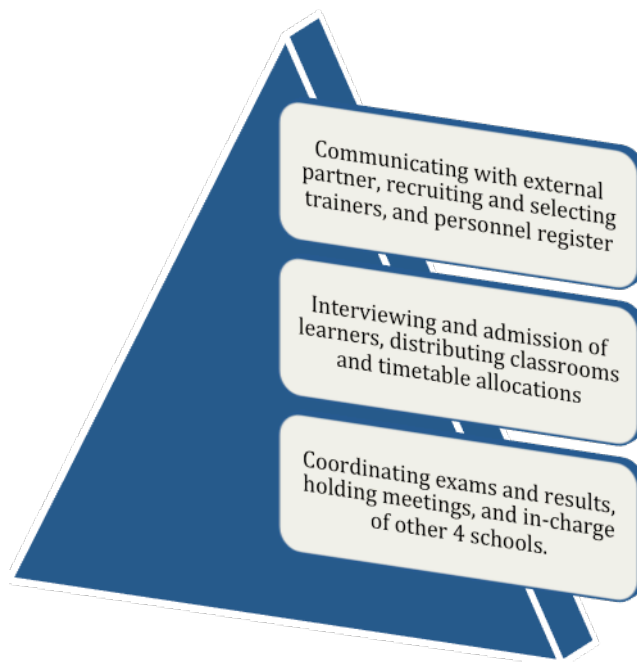


Figure 4.1 Illustrates the overwhelming duties of a manager in NSVC structure, which leaves no room for monitoring trainer performance and professional development. Cynthia revealed that she even worked during her free time to catch up with the workload.

As a result of the limitations and less support by the top management, she regretted

that the trainers,

Were not paid for preparation time and were also not responsible for the learner ability imbalances.

Findings from the minutes of the meetings show no indication of the actual support given to trainers apart from information passed on concerning examination dates and requirements, entry-level assessment, new courses and books. There is no discussion of trainer professional development apart from recommendations to attend courses to gain required certificates in Gender, Diversity and First Aid for employment purposes.

At this point, in the study, the interviewees were able to question the management's role and to even state appropriate measures. There was an urgent call for change and numerous suggestions were made.

#### **4.8.2 The trainers call for changes in the management**

The staff considered several alternatives in their professional context. Table 4.11 is a summary of the responses from the interviews about the kind of support they expect from the management and changes that could enhance improvements (Fullan, 2001).

**Table 4.11** Support expected from the management.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• House training classes in teaching strategies</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Conflict management</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Library provision</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Providing trainers with the most modern equipment necessary for</li></ul>

multimedia classes
• Forums
• Workshops for language teachers
• Further professional training
• Support in managing disruptive behaviour in class and supervision experts
• Paid preparation time
• Provision of learning materials
• Foster mutual communication structures
• Incentives (praise)

The responses from the interviews indicate trainers' need for recognition and better treatment; Doris called for acknowledgement of a job well done because she felt dissatisfied,

When I got a three months notice of termination of my work contract from the company I had been working for some years. I felt so deeply disappointed and underestimated after giving so much and 'becoming' good feedbacks from the students.

Similarly most trainers were able to reflect on incidents that were mostly touching. They pointed out examples of unsuccessful approaches but at the same time gave advice on what could work as in Hammersley et al. (2007) evidence-based approach. There was a common call for the management to support the trainers by showing understanding as remarked by Annalore,



Understanding – If we deal with some trouble-makers who want to spoil the classes, if they want to do something, the management should stand behind us. They should understand our situation, be kind, give us support inform of communication, this would be very helpful.

The overall findings depict the trainer as a reflective practitioner (Kolb, 1984; Schön, 1987). This idea seems to be quite present in NSVC even though the trainers did not mention it. They saw the importance of learning through experience and reflection in their daily work.

#### 4.8.3 Managements' need for change

The managers were asked to suggest the kind of changes they would like to see in the organisation. Sylvia's suggestions for change was connected to the many complicated issues, especially the internal structure:

- Lack of motivation
- Senior managers paid less attention and care during admission
- Negative effects on learners
- Ineffective and unsuitable course

She concluded that, the complaints portrayed a negative image of the college. She had learned that changes could bring good people and proposed the following changes, see table 4.12

**Table 4.12** Desired changes in the management

Decentralisation of the management
Creation of middle management
Creation of workers' council
Create attractive courses

Support change of teaching strategies
Provide time and opportunity for professional development

Similarly, Cynthia commented about changes in regard to the main principles and characteristics of teaching adults. She suggested that trainers should treat the learners with care and understanding,

Take each one for serious. Use methods that enforce involvement of each student. Deal tactfully with mistakes because some students are very sensitive. Some of them had bad experiences with mistakes at school. The students should have fun in class and enjoy dealing with exercises.

Some of Cynthia's remarks had appeared in Pratt's (2005) literature on perspectives of teaching the adult learner. Her opinion was critical of the teacher/learner relationship, which seemed to be considered when there were complaints or conflicts in the class. She felt that it was important for teachers to talk together about these distinctive principles and characteristics of teaching adults. Additionally, develop common methods and materials, which could be used by all teachers.

The responses from interviews with trainers about recruitment and selection of trainers had brought to light some of the weaknesses of the management. For this reason, I listened to the senior managers explain how they recruited and selected trainers. When asked the questions, imagine you are appointing a new trainer. What are the key characteristics or qualities you would be looking for that this person is a good teacher? There was a wide range of qualities mentioned, from age, education and skills. Sylvia commented,

I would not put a young person in a group where the people are older. That is strident. That does not fit. One needs a certain age or. But the vice verse is possible. You can put an older person in a group of young learners. Of course I would consider education, experience. I would pay attention how the person. Is it a technical subject or a soft skill subject?

Other suggestions included character, authenticity, and love for working with people in groups or individuals, relevance of topics, team-player qualities and organisation skills consistent with some of Darling-Hammond's (2000) teacher qualities and student achievement. I compared these qualities with the trainers and learners' responses; my conclusion was that there was a loophole in the way the recruitment processes were done. The trainers seemed to be aware of the qualities based on their actual experiences in the class. Lassnigg (2011) was critical of the peculiar contracts; poor pay and even argued that very little is known about this type of trainer. Most trainers in my study did not address this issue of payment and job- security, only 2 trainers did. They were more concerned with improvements concerning the challenging situations.

Subsequently, the managers were then asked to talk about what they thought were the difficulties the trainers experienced and how they would support them. Surprisingly, they identified lack of time to prepare professionally, challenges of having mixed abilities and different levels, and big classes. In supporting the trainers, Cynthia suggested creating small manageable groups of 10-12 students, which was consistent with findings from research by NIACE (2011) about managing challenging behaviour in unemployment classes. Other suggestions were,

- Online testing for new students
- Providing results immediately
- Pre-courses on the supposed level of learners for one week to find out the appropriate stage, for example speaking skills because short interviews delivered too little information

- Proper and suitable material for all classes
- A mixture of teaching methods – adapting material on the Internet, online tests and exercises, face-to-face teaching units and one-to-one teaching units.

Other difficulties were linked to external forces. Cynthia pointed out that sometimes the delivery of quality teaching was hindered by lack of financial support,

There isn't any range of support in PES projects because nearly everything is documented and fixed at the start of the project and the cost structure is very tight.

Moreover, the senior managers were quick to point out suggestions about how the training of trainers could be improved to better prepare them to teach adults. A commonly shared remark, was expressed by Cynthia, the need for,

Some knowledge about the psychological background of motivation, supervision of teachers' own behaviour and feelings as a student. Role-plays as a teacher and as a student. Job shadowing (work as an observer) in classes and talk about the experience in class with a skilled teacher

When asked to comment on whether the trainers were well equipped to teach adults, Cynthia remarks seemed to contradict the reality in New Star Vocational College,

Most teachers attended a course for teaching adults and know how to plan and hold a course. Above that they should take further training and supervision about difficult situations in class and exercise and talk about methods that they use frequently and learn new methods or concepts about the state-of-the-art in teaching.

What is evident in her comments are the acknowledgement of difficult situations and a recommendation for professional development in tackling problems, and forums to discuss teaching strategies and new methods.

To be effective the trainers need to empathise with the students and Cynthia comments,

Have some knowledge about their native language, which would be good. A teacher has to be a good observer to know what's going on in class. He/she should have consolidated knowledge about pedagogical methods. An effective teacher affects the students.

In the literature I read on providers of adult education (Stentzel, 1986; Schlögl and Gruber, 2003; OECD, 2004a; Steinmayer, 2009; Lassnigg, 2011; Hackl and Frisenbichler, 2014), there was strong criticism expressed, which showed that success or performance in the institutions was judged by financial criteria. This raised questions about values and ethics of providing educational services. It also touched on issues of quality, the role of the top management and those who are given the responsibility of implementing. The dilemmas that occur are consistent with Lassnigg's (2011) research that points out the many contradictions that exist in adult education, lack of transparency and accountability. He insists that adult education in Austria is still a difficult section of education, to fully understand the decision-making and organisational processes.

## Conclusion

In chapter 4 the overall findings show that nearly all trainers and managers' interviews, and responses from learner open-ended questionnaires, and student feedback forms recognised the need to improve trainers by developing skills they require to teach unemployed learners.

The policy documents do not reflect the necessity of developing skills because the assumption is that the trainers already possess these skills when they are recruited. Adult education learning policy and trainer policy varies according to the many programmes that exist. Trainer practice is influenced by the national policy, trainer policy and institutional policy.

The themes that emerged comprised the foundation of the study. All these themes discussed above are interconnected in improving trainer professional skills. Theories of adult learning including psychological ones form a greater part of trainer development but it was also important to understand the difficulties of learning by considering andragogical theories. Quality teaching and qualities of a good trainer was key to understanding the trainers' real needs and identifying the kind of professional models suitable for this particular context. The call for major changes in the organisation is the beginning of improving the quality of learning and teaching.

Chapter 5 will discuss the findings and implications for practice and policy.

## **Chapter 5**

### **5 Discussion of the implications for practice and policy and future research**

#### **5.1 Introductions**

In this thesis I have reported on factors that could foster on improving trainers' teaching quality by equipping them with additional professional skills through suitable CPD models. In the Austrian context, adult education has become a vehicle that is seen as supporting adult learners and compensating for opportunities lost in early stages of education. Currently, adult education is geared towards lifelong learning, founded on a strong idea that everyone is capable and valuable in society and should therefore be trained to participate effectively in building the country, economically and socially.

In this study, I acknowledge that teaching quality in unemployment provisions is closely related to the quality of trainers and therefore trainer selection, recruitment and preparation is essential in supporting learners. It is important to recognize researchers such as Lassnigg (2011), Hackl and Frisenbichler (2014) and Schneeberger (2006) who argue that in the Austrian context, the role of trainers in adult education should be taken seriously and supported, otherwise reforms in adult education may face great difficulties.

The majority of trainers in Austria teach without relevant qualifications or special knowledge on how adults learn. Most of them have no training but have subject qualifications or were trained to teach at early education stages or in secondary

schools. About 80% are part-time trainers who have a significant workload, dealing with administrative duties, mentoring, behavioral and emotional disorders, learning difficulties, doing social work and teaching big classes. Chen (2014) and Lassnigg (2011) show that this group of trainers is disadvantaged when compared to their counterparts, teachers in schools, because they do not enjoy job security, a good salary and professional help mechanisms. Trainers are left with the daunting task of managing unemployed learners yet in the Austrian context demands of the labor market keep on changing.

During data collection periods, I interviewed trainers and managers, and sent out open-ended questionnaires to learners in NSVC to find out the needs of adult learners in terms of quality teaching and qualities of a good trainer, and to indicate how professional development can enhance equipping trainers with professional skills to support unemployed learners.

Therefore, Chapter 5 provides a discussion of the findings of the study linked to the research questions and shows the implications of these findings. I have also identified some of the limitations that occurred. I have indicated implications for promoting quality teaching in unemployment provisions in Austria and for practice in NSVC that is the focus of this study. Further, a strategy for implementing CPD in supporting the trainers to develop teaching skills has been proposed. My arguments for this study are very significant for the policy makers and practitioners, which make valuable contributions to the field of adult education with a special focus on trainers of unemployed adult learners. The investigation shows that emerging themes from the data collected are clearly connected to practice by integrating learning into



everyday life, planning strategically, changing the way things are done and promoting professional dialogue with the external partner. Finally, I have pointed out issues that can be considered for further research

## **5.2 Research findings linked to the research questions**

In the following sections, I have summarised the main findings of my study and related them to the research questions pointed out in chapter 1 of the thesis, these questions will be restated accordingly.

### **5.2.1 Research question 1: What are the unemployed adult learners and adult trainers' perception of adult education at New Star Vocational College?**

NSVC was chosen because of its philosophy that enables adult learners with limited qualifications and challenges to develop new skills. My focus was on how unemployed learners and trainers felt about adult learning in NSVC. Therefore, my intention was not to assess the suitability and value of NSVC's programmes against an external standard but to find out how contented and successful the stakeholders were in NSVC with their daily routines and whether their needs were being met.

The question focused on the experiences of trainers and unemployed learners but not on how they defined adult education. Trainers found that the learners had complex issues and were too dependent on them; they were too focused on fulfilling the Public Employment Service requirements by attending courses. Therefore obtaining an attendance certificate rather than gaining from the experience of learning meant that some of them did not have the right attitude to learning.

In addition, the findings show that adult learners face challenges attributed to a range of complex issues, which hinder learning (see the challenges of teaching unemployed learners in chapter 3). The findings indicate a necessity to create a learning environment where the needs of unemployed learners are met: a conducive place that the learners feel relaxed and comfortable to articulate their difficulties or to ask for help. The learners' desire is to have an understanding trainer who supports them emotionally; this repeatedly appeared in the open-ended questionnaires. They want a trainer who can bring fun and creativity in the classroom, who can treat them equally, and is also able to explain even the most difficult content in a simple manner. On the other hand, some learners showed lack of engagement in learning while others were there to gain their unemployment benefits although there were learners who were still motivated to learn. The needs of the learners seemed to be more complex than the managers' as indicated in the study. The value for emotional support and good trainer-learner relationship seemed to be valued more than the end goals of access to new jobs. It was surprising to realize that unemployed learners had high expectations of their trainers in class regarding emotional support, recognition, and appreciation. Some of the trainers were observant and mentioned qualities like empathy, nurturing learners, and exercising patience as some key aspects to overcome some of the challenges in the classrooms.

Essentially, what emerges is that there was lack of proper communication on aims and expectations on both sides. The learners' desire was geared towards emotional support contrary to trainers' expectations of reasonable self-directed individuals. One can understand the frustrations and disappointments created because the trainers did not mention whether they asked learners about their needs. It is clear that

unemployed learners were able to articulate their needs but it was not clear whether the trainers found it reasonable or acceptable to address these needs in class, however, the majority of the trainers felt they had a deficit in skills to handle all the needs of the learners. The trainers' assumption is that adult learners should be active in learning but this contradicts those who have had no experience or never knew how to learn as mentioned in the study. Rogers (2002) suggested that in learning even adult learners do take a familiar student role where they expect to be led by the teacher and therefore take a passive role.

Considering the many roles and responsibilities, the trainers in this study felt 'overburdened' and 'overstretched' by challenging circumstances of unemployed learners. However, they valued their work and each seemed to have developed teaching methods (survival strategies) to overcome these difficulties. On the other hand, the trainers claimed to have learnt from the learners' experiences and also to have had some successful moments.

To promote contentment and commitment to the development of good learning, Solare, one of the interviewees made suggestions to redefine and revise the existing program plan as follows,

- Prolong the course duration and also include practical aspects for better achievement
- Promote learning and coaching for effective learning strategies, and also deal with prior negative learning experiences
- Provide social education

- Encourage individual coaching on; conflict situations with the group or trainer, deal with personal issues like exams, family and finances, provide assistance with administrative matters and psychological problems
- Use motivation to reduce drop out rate

Other suggestions are to use data from the students' feedback forms in order to respond to some of the issues mentioned above, and also to tailor CPD to fit the trainers' needs. The study has indicated that most of the information acquired from this type of evaluation form is done at the end of the course and is hardly used or either it is often too late to implement the changes because the group has already left. It is essential that evaluation be done during the course to detect any challenges, and to seek relevant suggestions that can enhance learning. Some of the complaints could and can be avoided.

### **5.2.2 Research question 2: How do adult unemployed learners and adult trainers perceive teaching quality in New Star Vocational College?**

The findings show that quality teaching is equated with good teaching, which is reflected in the qualities of a good trainer. The learners identified good experiences of learning, and associated them with emotional support, social skills as well as being treated equally more than the cognitive aspects. Empathy and understanding were repeated several times. The trainers too recognised the role of emotional intelligence (Goleman, 1995; Day, 1999) as being important for this target group, because it promoted learning. For them quality teaching is not just engaging the learners or deepening their knowledge but showing empathy, tolerance, and patience to enable the learners achieve the desired outcomes. It is teaching that includes

learners of all abilities and dispositions. In order to achieve quality, good preparation, proper training, and competence were emphasised as suggested by Looney (2011) and Hemmer (2014).

Learners expressed teaching quality as,

Being competent, understanding, listening and responding to learners' weaknesses and strengths, and quality training.

Trainers' view of teaching quality, is expressed by Ceebie,

Teaching quality can be summed up in three words: training, preparation and personal confidence.

Teaching quality can be fostered through learning together as in Leithwood et al.'s (2007) concept of a learning organisation, by promoting collegiality and doing away with the culture of 'look after myself' attitude as mentioned by Leroy, an interviewee. The majority of the learners' views on quality teaching seemed to be connected to prior learning and good experiences. The qualities of a good trainer identified by learners was expressed by P8,

A trainer that is friendly, competent in all questions and presents even the most difficult content treats all the learners in an equal manner and takes them seriously.

In contrast the trainers pointed out, as remarked by Maria,

That a good trainer should have patience, sense of humour, be creative, an outgoing personality and empathy, be a learner and have solid knowledge on whatever they are teaching.

Most of the participants identified the relationship between trainer and learner as being important for a good learning atmosphere. It is also clear from these responses that trainers need to be well prepared as emphasised in Day (1999), Hustler et al. (2003), and Guskey (2002).

The majority of the trainers admitted to lack of teaching skills but some have made an effort to better themselves on the job through classroom experiences that work. Furthermore, there were good suggestions made for any beginning trainer by Leroy, the need to have interpersonal skills, improvisation and material making skills. (See chapter 4 Table 4.6 Summary of necessary skills to teach unemployed people).

### **5.2.3 Research question 3: How can trainers be helped to enhance their professional skills to teach unemployed adult learners in New Star Vocational College, Austria?**

From the interview responses, open-ended questionnaires and students' evaluation forms, all the participants understood how trainers could enhance their teaching. Trainers were able to identify suitable CPD models so as to meet their professional skill needs. Most of these models were found in the literature for example in Cordingley et al. (2003) and Lieberman (1996) cited in Rose and Reynolds (2009:219): direct teaching (courses, workshops), learning in school (such as peer coaching, critical friendship, mentoring, action research and task-related, and planning teams) and out of school learning (learning networks, visits to other schools, school university partnership). The participants also suggested suitable curriculum for their CPD, including teaching adults in their training from the start. Perhaps discussing certain possible problem areas in their training (like effective

learning methods, unmotivated students, how to integrate people from all walks of life). A trainer's role is to ensure that learners succeed in dealing with difficulties like fear of learning and failure, being able to cope with classroom activities and enjoy learning, and also help them manage the many responsibilities.

The findings in the study show that induction and continuing professional development of the staff are essential in building a firm foundation in teaching unemployed learners, which is supported by Earley and Kinder (1994). The greatest obstacle facing trainers today is lack of adequate training and this is pointed out by Lankard (1993:3) who argued that trainers are 'recruited for their professional competences rather than pedagogical training, may lack the teaching skills and experiences required in this classroom, and may lack training in adult education'. More importantly, Thomas an interviewee, points out that another obstacle that reflects lack of professional development is because NSVC 'doesn't fulfil the role of an institution in terms of teacher development/collegiality/career development'.

In view of the above comment, the managers have the responsibilities to create opportunities for trainers to attend courses, workshops and seminars, and to provide library materials. Other suggestions include additional skills to teach unemployed people, the need for social skills, and an educational background

The investigation has pointed out that the tendency to ignore these issues after recruitment and selection has been done. It seems to have led to difficulties that have been disclosed in the interviews, questionnaires and literature consulted. This view is

reinforced by lack of mentorship support and clear appraisal system that helps trainers to identify their weaknesses and strengths.

For effectiveness in improving staff performance, the managers should be interested in supporting the development of trainers. They need to empower trainers to take charge of their learning. Data from the detailed profiles revealed lack of useful skills to teach adult learners. Zaina, remarked that at the beginning of her teaching career there was,

A feeling of alienation and inadequacy that any beginning trainer has suffered in terms of lack of necessary skills and support.

Leroy recommended forming a network of teachers or social group, which is consistent with Day's (1999) research to contribute to personal and professional growth. Leroy's suggestions about helping the new trainer to integrate are similar to Tuckman and Jensen's (1977) stages of team development, especially the forming stage that helps members to get familiar with each other. It is an opportunity to get to know the goals and responsibilities, type of learners in the unemployment class, and relevant resources. They should be able to discuss suitable methods of teaching these groups, share information about expected challenges in the class, get tips on how to deal with the unusual and disruptive behaviour. This clarification stage is essential to deal with any misunderstanding and to build the trainers' confidence.

The case study shows that the management can sustain and enhance the team's effectiveness by encouraging and empowering the members to grow through continuous professional development. It is by working together to achieve shared



goals and mutual values that improvements can be realised. Of course there are challenges like diversity of qualifications, skills and motivation among the trainers, but a strong development of trust and respect would enable them to cope with their daily routine or even create focused sessions to enhance improvements. Fullan (2001) and O'Neil (2007) demonstrate that in managing teams, conflicts can be seen as positive and constructive if differing views are appreciated and compromise reached.

As the research progressed there was a call for well-prepared trainers. Most trainers interviewed desired to have preparation time paid but again this depends on the financial budget and internal policies. There is lack of external policies on professionalisation to support trainers in all areas of education like their counterparts in schools as pointed out in Schneeberger (2006), which is a barrier that seems to curtail debates concerned with these issues. This is even made more difficult by the fact that providers are not linked together and the curriculum is often based on individual institutions, so that each is isolated and runs courses independently without any inspectorate control.

The following section looks at the contribution of the study and implications for practice and policy.

### **5.3 Contributions**

Presently, there are relatively few studies published about 'unemployment and trainer practice', this gap encouraged me to develop a study that would contribute to knowledge of trainer teaching quality in NSVC, Austria. This study therefore

contributes to adult education within unemployment provisions, which has received little attention. The need to change and improve the status of adult education has been appreciated by different policy makers. Although progress in improving adult education is slow, there are signals to provide more support and a level of quality. Less attention has been paid to the professional development of trainers. This is recognised in the few institutions available. In this case study, about 80% are part-time trainers who are not trained in adult education. Yet adult qualifications are expected in NSVC and Austria but the teacher training institutions only focus on basic and high schoolteachers.

The narrative in this thesis is told from the perspective of German, Austrian, English, African, Polish, Italian, American, Slovakian and Hungarian participants. This narrative also enriches data in a non-English context but also presents practical examples that can be used to tackle some of the challenges and difficulties of teaching within unemployment provisions. This thesis depicts complex and varying needs of unemployed learners but also indicates the crucial role of trainers in quality teaching that may lead to positive outcomes (Darling-Hammond, 2000).

Below are implications on how the study can influence trainer preparation to contribute to improved teaching and learning quality.

## **5.4 Implications for practice**

### **5.4.1 Trainer Preparation**

The findings show that most trainers are not prepared to teach adult learners or unemployed learners, and most of the skills they possess have either been acquired

on the job or from observations from their own teachers. The available trainer training does not prepare trainers adequately. A wide range of skills is required to satisfactorily teach unemployed learners (See Table 4.6). The trainers are expected to possess knowledge of the teaching subject but also to understand cultural and social conditions of learners, and be able to respond to emotional and behavioural challenges as well as support learners with learning difficulties, understand the differences between teaching adults and young people (Rogers, 2003). Further, be able to maintain a good learning atmosphere in the face of all the challenges. The study has demonstrated the need to address trainer skills and to look for ways to improve their competence. Some of the soft skills mentioned like emotional competence may be acquired from teaching and life experiences while other skills may be acquired through formal learning. Therefore, the study supports the wider implications of adult learning, teaching quality, CPD and its importance in improving education for both learner and trainer. There is definitely a need to have a document that includes a clear strategic plan on how trainers can develop or improve teaching skills.

Most of the participants illustrated challenges that confronted them. Likewise, the responses from the learners demanded that the trainers be professionally prepared in terms of subject knowledge, emotional intelligence and skills necessary to teach them effectively. Most of the trainers mentioned particular benefits of proper preparation and training that would enable them to meet the challenges. This is linked to Day (1999) and Wenger's (1998) explanations of positive achievements in terms of good teaching and staff development.

Figure 5.1 illustrates the processes that can be used to support trainer development of skills even at the basic level of CPD.

**Figure 5.1** Strategy on how trainers can develop teaching skills



Another argument is to include trainers in the decision-making process, so that the teaching and learning framework transmits the institutional goals, and other stakeholders' priority for employability.

There is need to implement some of the suggestions made by learners and trainers, because the investigation has shown that the critique given in the students' feedback evaluation forms, only receives attention when there are too many negative remarks

about a trainer. Ultimately, comments on the type of course objectives, learning resources, distribution of learners, lack of social worker support, frequent change of trainers, and improvement recommendation appear to have been given less attention. The study has indicated the need to have additional professional knowledge and skills. It is almost unrealistic to expect trainers to be able to support learners with certain special needs without psychological background. This aspect came from the interviews and literature (learning difficulties, mental and physical challenges, or addictions). This would call for specialised attention but it would be appropriate to support or enable trainers to identify these difficulties in the course of learning if they are not obvious at the beginning. It is possible if the right mechanism is put in place of how trainers could react, and suggestions on what should happen to the learner. Such preparation is important. On the bases of NSVC, I would insist on training with the inclusion of psychological knowledge especially personality development, adult learning theories and motivation, and teaching material for practicing trainers.

- 1) The first implication is that trainers address additional professional skills like emotional intelligence, good preparation, proper training and competence through professional development.
- 2) Create an induction and mentoring system where trainers are made aware of the difficulties of unemployed learners in learning.
- 3) The evidence in the research has focused on trainers in unemployment classes and the urgent need for managerial support in improving teaching quality. The study has demonstrated the complicated task of equipping unemployed learners with employability skills.

The next section indicates key changes that could contribute to improved practice.

#### **5.4.2 Change in the organisation and administration**

It emerged that there are real challenges faced by the management but it is possible to pave way for changes. Key issues were identified that touch on the management's weakness, and discrepancy between goals and actual performance. Typical remarks by the majority of the participants are conflicting interests between trainers and the management, poor communication, inadequate policies.

The indication here is that there is a necessity to change beliefs and the culture of doing things for the long term (Fullan, 2001). It is essential to create a culture of change in the institution, where people work together as suggested by Stoll et al. (2012). In Day (1999) the core concepts are people working together and sharing knowledge, to create new knowledge, and to find ways to solve problems, so as to improve and bring desired changes in learning and teaching, which is a useful and reasonable goal.

Hence, for any changes to occur, Stoll (2008) pointed out, that commitment should begin at the top. It is almost impossible according to all the responses from the study, to initiate change structures without the management's support. To appreciate a learning culture, there are proposals in literature on improvement, which call for leaders to become lead learners.

There are considerable ways to balance internal needs with external demands. Literature on leadership and management has proposed several strategies of how this

can be achieved. There is need for clarity on educational goals. So, the desire for a supportive management is tied to good organisational skills, being approachable and open, having appropriate knowledge and moral values. The organisational challenges can be mastered in a context of what Leithwood et al. (2007) referred to in their research on fostering teacher leadership as participative and decision-making that leads to more effective organisational change.

The study has shown that it is important to involve trainers in making decisions regarding choice of curriculum, learner distribution and professional development skills training. It would be essential that trainers are encouraged to seek support of their top managers as they develop a professional development plan or curriculum. The desire is to be committed to learners by creating a collaborative atmosphere to effect appropriate changes that can influence the way things are done. The study findings indicate the necessity of creating a special needs coordinator, which is tied to strategic planning as a means of achieving changes in managing the institution better.

#### **5.4.3 Strategic planning**

This thesis, drawing evidence from the transcripts and (NSVC policy 2013, 2014) documents, shows that the managers can be involved in planning strategically.

- By using evidence from a wide range of experts, concerned with adult education and the labour market demands
- Linking institutional goals to shared decisions with trainers
- Mapping out clearly how the set goals can be achieved
- Looking beyond now and planning for both emergent and future activities

- Paying attention to weaknesses and limitations

Although strategic development is complex, there are advantages identified in Johnson and Scholes (2002).

The study revealed that conflict between expectations and accountability in the institution is an issue that leaves all the stakeholders dissatisfied. Hellawell and Hancock (2007) argue that in large organisations collegiality tends to be neglected and is challenged by managerial control and external performance demands.

In the case of NSVC, it would be advisable to instil a performance management policy as an overall strategy by Armstrong (2012) so as to implement set plans and to monitor the kind of impact it may have on learner outcome. This is because there is a contradiction between the set plans (intended) in NSVC (2013, 2014) policy document and realised goals. This is consistent with studies on educational change; Fullan (2001) refers to this as an implementation gap. The reasons for limitations have emerged from the study, which have been attributed to learners' difficulty, trainer inability to cope and lack of support by the management, external pressures and lack of a clear strategy.

Johnson and Scholes (2002) suggest the need to identify a strategy that can fit the changing needs of the institution. Some of the proposals are drawn from existing research and from the study, which are developing a learning organisation to improve on learning and teaching outcomes, where the staff can learn and develop together through continuing professional development. Then have performance



management as an overall strategy to overcome some of the mentioned internal and external challenges.

Although there are moral and practical challenges, the management should be able to balance these challenges and maintain the institutions' values as suggested by Day (2000) on transformational leadership.

The next section illustrates the study's implications for policy and policy-making.

### **5.5 Implication for Policy**

A significant finding in this study showed that the Austrian adult education policy, labour market policy, trainer policy and providers exist autonomously whereas they have some bearing on trainer practice (Hackl and Friesenbichler, 2014). Other issues included lack of a clear professional model for trainers, a standardised framework for training like in other professions, discrepancies and complexity of the system that employs trainers (Lassnigg, 2011). Although there was partial evidence of one institution concerned with trainer certification and training, it is not necessarily linked to the unemployment provisions as discussed in section 2.3

As a result of all the findings and discussion in the study, questions unfold regarding governments' own experts on educational knowledge of what kinds of trainers are required for the labour market programmes. The overall responsibilities designated on the trainers and the commitment expected is enormous as illustrated in Chapter 4 of data analysis and interpretation. Yet trainers' lack of essential professional skills to manage unemployed learners can be linked back to trainer policy of recruitment

and selection that is not regulated and is dependent on each provider (Lassnigg, 2011). The detailed study on trainers' teaching quality revealed the importance of effective teaching, trainer preparation and professional development to ensure that trainers have the competence to teach these unemployment classes.

Furthermore the development of future trainers in additional professional skills and competences is not predictable in the available training, only a certification process is done. Therefore trainers are faced with an area of teaching that they have no training or sufficient knowledge but rely on the experience they have gathered to manage unemployed learners as revealed in the interviews, student feedback forms and questionnaire.

The providers seem to be aware of these challenges but offer very little support in terms of teaching resources and practical expertise. The professional development of trainers has received little attention and remains at the general knowledge with minimal development. The interest to redefine trainer development and providers was reflected in the interviews. The essence of having additional professional skills and understanding the difficult circumstances of the learners raises a question regarding the future of trainer identity and professionalisation (Lassnigg, 2012) with regard to unemployment provisions. This study shows that there is:

- Need to support providers by instilling guidelines that focus on trainer policy especially in the complex circumstances of unemployed learners.
- Ensure access to high quality CPD
- Support initial training of trainers for unemployment provisions and consider trainer professionalisation.

- Influence decisions on how to select appropriate courses for unemployed learners by engaging external partner.
- Consider the development of future provisions for unemployed adult learners with learning difficulties

This study explains and supports the arguments that trainers feel ‘abandoned’ by the management and are left on their own to struggle, which amounts to lack of focused leadership and proper management. The evidence shows that unemployed learners have more difficulties in learning, yet the system does not make room for the differences. Instead they use a set of standards and mechanisms, in terms of teaching and learning resources without paying special attention to the needs of the learners. Despite the overwhelming evidence in the study, it may be difficult to effectively change the system overnight, as it is a gradual process. Obviously, this kind of evidence may require further research.

The following section is important as it touches on policy makers and the role of external partner.

#### **5.5.1 Role of external partner**

A key issue that emerged is the role of the external partner. There is need to find a balance between the internal and external context because it is difficult to ignore the Public Employment Service as an external partner. The study has shown that its influence has both a positive role for the management but a detrimental effect on adult learners who feel ‘forced’ to attend courses that may have no impact on their personal and labour needs. Although the managers seem to have no influence on

budget allocation, which are externally decided, the participants are convinced that they could play a better role by negotiating for goals that can only add value to adult education. It is obvious that there are power imbalances and tensions.

The fundamental issue is that the partner should be in a position to,

- Analyse and redefine unemployment training
- Monitor the kind of retraining mechanisms in place
- Scrutinise and redefine the role of the providers
- Put in place clear inspectorial systems that are transparent and accountable
- Monitor providers and their role in trainer development

On the other hand, providers seem to be faced by challenges of budget cuts and staff redundancies but they should be able to inform the partner of unrealistic target groups and lack of expertise in certain areas. It is essential that they establish mutual relationships and trust. In fact, difficulties can be discussed to benefit unemployed learners instead of sending them to courses they have no desire for. There is an assumption that the managers are in agreement with decisions made externally and seem to have an advantage, yet these decisions create uncertainty and ambiguity for the trainers and learners.

The section below briefly focuses on some of the limitations in my study.

## **5.6 Limitations of the study**

The limitations experienced were connected to data collection in the field. First, the limitations of the study comprised absence of learners' interviews. I did not have

access to those who had answered the questionnaires due to my knee injury and also because the courses had a time limit of 6-8 weeks. I would have liked to check on certain responses raised concerning trainer improvement and self-directed learning activities by talking to unemployed learners.

Secondly, observation of trainers in the actual classroom could have provided more insights into the challenges of teaching unemployed learners. All the trainers interviewed believed that the challenges experienced in class were due to learners being 'difficult'. The reasons given are diverse and sometimes contradictory as analysed in the collected data. In future, it would be important to include observations as a tool in the classrooms to assess the trainers' teaching methodologies and to define clearly the professional skills they need.

### **5.7 Positive outcomes of the study**

The study enabled me to,

- Gain understanding on how adults learn
- Understand how to handle problems of unemployed learners
- Support trainers to prepare professionally

Even so, I acknowledge that at the beginning of my studies, I was not conversant with the broad social-political circumstances in my study but as the research progressed, I became touched by unemployed learners' situation and learning difficulties. My lack of knowledge was mostly due to my prior personal experience as a teacher in secondary school education. There was considerable development after reading literature on adult learning theories, and improvements in my own practice and that of colleagues.

Before carrying out the study, there was no evidence or studies about trainers' challenges of teaching unemployed learners in Austria. In fact data collected from interviews, open-ended questionnaires and literature showed that there was need for additional qualifications to teach this target group. Ranging from social skills, pedagogical and andragogical skills, gender and diversity, conflict management and ability to manage diverse groups of learners with different cultural, social and educational backgrounds.

The investigation clearly shows that most of the judgment about unemployed learners is based on lack of understanding complex circumstances and issues that have contributed to the learners' inability to learn confidently. As a result the majority of the trainers had assumed that unemployed learners are difficult to teach. On the other hand, Leroy an interviewee gave rich detailed descriptions and labelled the problems precisely, which resonated with Dobmeier and Moran's (2008) findings on causes for disruptive behaviour and NIACE's (2012) research on managing challenging behaviour within skills provisions of the unemployed.

Suggestions were made about how trainers can manage the learners effectively:

- Have the ability to inspire
- Motivate
- Judge the progress of the course participants
- Handle the difficult participants but also ensure joy in working in these types of classrooms.

What emerged from this study too was the need for the management to support trainers. There was strong criticism of the senior managers from all the participants.

Typical remarks by Cynthia pointed out,

- Lack of mentorship and induction period for trainers
- No concrete system of fitting substitute trainers into the team
- Lack of flexibility
- Strict guidelines that leave no room for changes.

The suggestions are for the senior managers to create opportunities for trainers to come together, to identify their needs and choose the best possible CPD to enhance their teaching.

Other issues raised in the study are the demand for the management,

- To provide useful internal and further training
- Set standard requirements for the trainers
- Create a strong learning organisation
- Differentiate between language and administration work
- Give incentives to motivate the trainers
- Create trust in them.

The management was advised to deal with trainer difficulties rather than sacking them because there were complaints about how ‘trainers come and go’ mentioned by several trainers. To avoid future complications, they need to refocus on their recruitment and selection strategies. Moreover, literature on adult education and learning in Austria depicts the discrepancy between planning and implementation processes.

In this thesis suggestions are made for the way forward as explained below.

### **5.8 Future research**

Research on trainers teaching English in Austrian unemployment provisions to date seems to be rare. These researchers Lassnigg, (2006, 2011), Schneeberger, (2006), Weber et al. (2012) and Hackl and Friesenbichler (2014) have provided some information on adult education and trainer's lack of professionalisation; however, they did not focus on trainers of unemployed learners. This study was small scale but the issues identified deserve large-scale studies.

- Comparative studies including trainers of unemployed learners in other institutions.
- Address and expand on building skills in teaching unemployed learners
- Promote continuing professional development for trainers of unemployed adult learners.
- Build on the findings of the research about unemployed learners

### **Conclusion**

The research provided invaluable insight into the challenges of trainers of unemployed adult learners as discussed and illustrated by the participants in the study. Their interpretations are realistic and can be integrated in decision-making processes. Some of the workable ones may contribute in enhancing teaching quality for unemployed learners and equipping trainers with professional knowledge and skills. The management and other decision-makers may have to involve other educational experts, and collaborate in sharing professional decisions and



responsibilities so as to manage the complex circumstances in adult education of trainers of unemployed learners

Although this is a single case study, the findings in this study show the importance of engaging trainers who have sufficient knowledge in pedagogical/ andragogical teaching strategies to meet the needs of the learners and labour market changes in NSVC. In addition, the study shows that a crucial component is to develop the trainers on the job through continuing professional development. Finally, the participants have suggested models that are flexible and contextually defined to build necessary skills to teach this particular adult learner.

## References

- Aday, L. (1996) Designing and conducting health surveys. 2. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Adey, P. (2006) A Model for Professional Development of Teacher Thinking. *Thinking Skills and Creativity*, 1 (1) (2006), pp. 49–56
- Adler, P. A. and Adler, P. (1987) Observational techniques in Denzin, N. K. and Lincoln, Y. S. *Handbook of Qualitative Research*, 377-92 London: SAGE.
- ALPINE (2008) Adult Learning Professions in Europe, *A study of current situation, trends and issues*: Final Report, European Union.
- Armstrong, M. (2009) 4<sup>th</sup> Edition, Armstrong's handbook of Performance Management, An Evidence-based Guide to Delivering Performance, Kogan Page: Philadelphia, USA.
- Atwell, G. and Baumgartl, B. (2008) Creating Learning Spaces: Training for Trainers and For Professional development, *Research for Practice Volume 9*, Navreme Publications, Vienna.
- Auer, C. (2012) E-Learning Methodology in Austrian Adult Education based on English E-Grammar for Adult ESL Learners, [www.conference.pixel-online.net](http://www.conference.pixel-online.net)
- Bailey, K. D. (1994) *Methods of Social Research* (fourth Edition). The Free Press: New York
- Bassey, M. (1999) *Case Study Research in Educational Settings*, Buckingham and Philadelphia, Open University Press.
- Belanger, P. (2011) Theories in Adult Learning and Education, *Study Guide in Adult Education*: Barbara Budria Publishers, Germany.
- Bentley, T. (1998) Learning Beyond the Classroom: education for a changing world, London, Routledge.
- Bernard, H. R. (1995) Informants. In *Research methods in anthropology: Qualitative and quantitative approaches* (2nd ed., pp. 165–179). Walnut Creek, CA: AltaMira Press.
- BERA (2004) British Educational Research Association Guidelines <http://www.bera.ac.uk/publications/guidelines> [accessed 7/3/2009].
- Berry, B. (2007) *The National Board for Professional Teaching Standards and the Future of a Profession*: Racine, Wisconsin.
- Birbili, M. (2000) Translating from one language to another, *Social Research Update*, 31, 1–7.

Blaschek, S. (1992) in Jarvis, P. (1992) *Perspectives on Adult Education and Training in Europe* by national Institute of Adult Education (England and Wales).

Bolam, R. (2002) Professional Development and Professionalism in Bush, T. & Bell, R. (Eds.) *The principles and practice of educational management* (pp. 103-118), London: Paul Chapman.

Bolam, R. and Weindling, D. (2006) Synthesis of research and evaluation projects concerned with Capacity-building through Teachers professional development.

Bolam, R., Stoll, L., Thomas, S., Greenwood, A., Hawkey, K., Ingram, M., and Smith, M. (2005) Creating and sustaining effective professional learning communities, Universities of Bristol\*, Bath\*\* and London, Institute of Education University of Bristol 2005, ISBN 1 84478 460 6.

Bologna Process (2007) [www.ehea.info/uploads/about/London\\_Communique\\_18may\\_2007.pdf](http://www.ehea.info/uploads/about/London_Communique_18may_2007.pdf)

Bologna Process (2009) [www.ehea.info/uploads/about/Leuven\\_Louvain-la-Neuve\\_Communique\\_April\\_2009.pdf](http://www.ehea.info/uploads/about/Leuven_Louvain-la-Neuve_Communique_April_2009.pdf)

Bologna Process (2015) [www.ehea.info/uploads/submittedFiles/5-2015/112705.pdf](http://www.ehea.info/uploads/submittedFiles/5-2015/112705.pdf)

Borko, H. (2004) Professional Development and Teacher Learning: Mapping the Terrain. *Educational researcher* 2004; 33; 3 DOI: 10.3102/0013189X033008003

Bouyssières, P and Trinquier, M.P. (2011) Trainers of Adults: Professional Representations and Training in Chaib, M., Danemark, B. and Selander, R. (2011) *Education, Professionalization and Social Representations: On the transformation of social knowledge*: Routledge: London

Bray, M. and Thomas, R. M. (1995) Levels of comparison in Educational studies, different insights from different literatures and the value of multi-level analysis, *Harvard Educational Review* 65 (3), 472-489.

Brislin, R. W. (1970) Back translation for cross-cultural research, *Journal of cross-cultural Psychology* 1, 186-216.

Brooksfield, S. (1995) Adult learning, an overview in Tuinman, A. (Ed.) *International Encyclopaedia of Education* Oxford: Pergamon Press.

Bryman, A. (2004) Social research methods (2nd Ed.), Oxford University Press.

Buck, J. (2002) Defining the professional expectations of faculty, *AAUP (American Association of University Professors) Journal* 17.

Buckley, S. and DuToit, A. (2010) Academics leave your Ivory tower: Form communities of practice, *Educational Studies Vol.36, Issue 5*.493-504.

- Burger J.M. (2009) Replicating Milgram: *American Psychologist*. 64:1–11.
- Burgess, R.G. (1989) (ed.) *Field Research: A Sourcebook and Manual*. London and New York: ROUTLEDGE
- Burgess, H., Sieminski, S., and Arthur, L. (2006) *Achieving your Doctorate in Education*, London: SAGE.
- Butcher, J. (2013) Seminar Notes: Making the case for case Study, residential weekend in June Open University.
- CEDEFOP (2010) VET in Europe: country reports, Thessaloniki, Cede fop <http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/EN/Information-services/vet-in-europe-country-reports.aspx> (accessed 31st August 2013).
- CEDEFOP (2010) Professional development opportunities for In-company trainers: A compilation of good practice.
- CEDEFOP (2012) where the qualification requirements are not regulated and are specified by individual institutions, the majority are in self-employment.
- CERI/ OECD (1992) *City Strategies for Lifelong Learning: Second on Educating Cities, No 3 in a Series from the 2<sup>nd</sup> International Congress of Educating Cities, 25-27 November*: Gothenburg.
- Charmaz, K. (2006) *Constructing Grounded Theory: A Practical Guide through Qualitative Analysis*. London: SAGE.
- Chen, C. J. (2014) Teaching Non-Traditional Adult Students: Adult Learning Theories in Practice. *Teaching in higher education*, 2014. Vol. 9. No. 40 406-418: Routledge Taylor and Francis Group.
- Claudinin, D. J. and Connelly, F.M. (1995) ‘Teachers professional knowledge landscapes: Teacher stories-Stories of teachers-school stories-Stories of school, *Educational Researchers*, 25, 3, pp.24-30.
- Cohen, L., Manion, L. and Morrison, K. (2007) *Research Methods in Education (5<sup>th</sup> Ed.)* London, Routledge Falmer.
- Cordingley, P., Bell, M., Rundell, B. and Evans, D. (2003) The impact of collaborative CPD on classroom teaching and learning: In *Research Evidence in Education Library*, Version 1.1.
- Creswell, J. W. (1994) *Research design: deductive and inductive approaches*, Thousand Oaks, CA, SAGE.
- Creswell, J. W. (1998) *Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design, choosing among 5 traditions*, Thousand Oaks, CA, SAGE.

Creswell, J. W. (2007) *Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design choosing among five approaches* (2<sup>nd</sup> Edition), Thousands Oaks, CA, SAGE.

Darling-Hammond, L. (1997) Doing What Matters Most: Investing in Quality Teaching, *National Commission on Teaching and America's Future*: NY, USA.

Darling-Hammond, L. (1999) Teacher Quality and Student Achievement: A review of state policy evidence. Center for the Study of Teaching and Policy, University of Washington.

Darling-Hammond, L. (2000) Teacher Quality and Student Achievement: A Review of State policy evidence, *Education policy analysis archives*, 8, 1–50.

Darling-Hammond, L. (2006) *Powerful teacher education: Lessons from exemplary programmes*, San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Darling-Hammond, L., Wei, C. R., Andrea, A., Richardson, N., and Orphanus, S. (2009) Professional Learning in the learning Profession, *A status report on teachers Development in the United States and Abroad*.

Dart, B. C., Burnett, P. C., Purdie, N., Boulton-Lewis, G., Campbell, J., & Smith, D. (2000) Students' conceptions of learning, the classroom environment, and approaches to learning, *The Journal of Educational Research*, 93(4) 262-270.

Day, C. (1997) In-service Teacher Education in Europe: Conditions and Themes for development in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. *Journal of In-service Education*, 23:1, 39-54  
*Published online, 20 Dec 2006 (Accessed on 17th July 2013)*

Day, C. (1999) *Developing Teachers: The challenges of lifelong learning*. London: Falmer Press.

Dey, I. (1999) *Grounding Grounded Theory: guideline to qualitative Inquiry* Academic press: San Diego

Denzin, N. K. (1989) *Interpretive Interactionism*, London: SAGE.

Denzin, N. K. and Lincoln, Y. S. (1994) *Handbook of Qualitative Research*. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE.

Denzin, N. K. (1997) Triangulation in Educational Research in Keesee, J. P. (ed.) *Educational Research, Methodology and Measurement, An International Handbook (second edition)*, Oxford: Elsevier Science, 318 – 22.

Dimmock, C. (1998) *Designing the learning-centred school: A cross-cultural perspective*: London.

Dobmeier, R. and Moran, J. (2013) Dealing with Disruptive Behaviour of Adult Learners In *New Horizons in Adult Education and Human Resources*: Published by

Wiley Periodicals: USA.

Dreyfus, H. L., & Dreyfus, S. E. (1986) *Mind over machine: The power of human intuition and expertise in the era of the computer*, Oxford: Basil Blackwell

Duignan, P. (2007) Authentic educative leadership for authentic learning in *Learning Matters, Catholic Education Office, Vol.12, 2, pp. 3-8*, Melbourne.

Earley, P. and Kinder, K. (1994) Initiation Rights: effective induction practices for new teachers, Windsor, NFER.

Eraut, M. E. (1994) *Developing professional knowledge and competence*, London: Falmer Press.

Eraut, M. E. (2000) Non-formal learning and tacit knowledge in professional work: *British Journal of Educational Psychology* (2000), **70**, 113–136 Printed in Great Britain © The British Psychological Society.

Etta. R. H. (2011) Teacher Preparation For Quality Teaching: *Journal of Teacher Education* 62(4) 397-407@ American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education.

European Commission (2008) Euro trainer: making lifelong learning: a study of the situation and qualifications of trainers in Europe. Institute of technology and education, *Final report, vol. Bremen*: ITB, [http://ec.europa.eu/education/more-information/doc/eurotrainer1\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/education/more-information/doc/eurotrainer1_en.pdf) (accessed 31.03.2013).

Ezzy, D. (2002) *Qualitative Analysis; Practice and Innovation*, London: Routledge.

Faulstich, P. and Ebner, G. H. (1986) *Erwachsene and Arbeitslosigkeit: Zur Praxis eines Schwerigen Verhältnisses*, München: Huber.

Fellinger-Fritz, A. and Steiner, K. (2011) Quality Tool Box für TrainerInnen und BeraterInnen [www.guideme.com.at](http://www.guideme.com.at)

Fink, M. (2009) Thesis on ‘Unemployment in Austria: Are Women likely to be Unemployed?’

French, J. R. P., Raven, B. (1959) The Bases of Social power. In D. Cartwright and A. Zander. *Group dynamics*. New York: Harper & Row

Fullan, M. (2001) (3rd edition), *The New Meaning of Educational Change*. New York, Teachers College Press.

Fullan, M. (2001) *Leading in a culture of change*, New York: Jossey-Bass.

Fullan, M. (2008) (on-line) *The Six Secrets of Change*, accessed: (03/08/13) from <http://www.michaelfullan.ca/handouts.htm>

Gage, N. (1989) 'The paradigm wars and their aftermath – A 'historical' sketch of research on teaching since 1989' Taken from: *Educational Researcher*, Vol.18, pp.4-10.

Gasson, S. (2006) Rigor in Grounded Theory Research: An Interpretive Perspective on Generating Theory from Qualitative Field Studies Drexel University, USA Drexel E-Repository and Archive <http://idea.library.drexel.edu/> Drexel University Libraries [www.library.drexel.edu](http://www.library.drexel.edu)

Geertz, C. (1973) Thick description: towards an interpretive theory of culture in Geertz, C. (ed.) *The Interpretation of Cultures*, New York: Basic Books.

Gibbs, R.G. (2010) Grounded Theory-Line-by-Line Coding. [http://www.Youtube.com/watch?V=Dfd\\_U-24egg](http://www.Youtube.com/watch?V=Dfd_U-24egg). Accessed on 10<sup>th</sup> January 2014

Gibson, C., Mederios, K. E., Giorgini, V., Mecca, T. J., Deveport, D. L., Connelly. S., and Mumford, D. M. (2014) A Qualitative Analysis of Power Differentials in Ethical Situations in Academia. *Ethics Behavior* 24(4): 311-32

Glaser, B. G. and Holton, J. (2004) Remodelling Grounded Theory In *Forum Qualitative Sozialforschung/Forum: Qualitative Social Research*.

Glaser, B. G. and Strauss. A. (1967) *The discovery of grounded theory*. Chicago: Aldine

Glaser, B. G. and Strauss, A. (2008) *The discovery of Grounded Theory: Strategies for qualitative research*. (Third edition) Aldine Transaction News Brunswick (USA)

Glaser, B. G. (1998) *Doing Grounded Theory: Issues and Discussion*. Mill Valley, CA: Sociology Press.

Glaser, B. G. (2010) Grounded Theory is the Study of a Concept. <http://www.Youtube.com/watch?v=OCpxaLQDnLk> (Accessed on 12 October 2013).

Gmeiner, G. M. (2003) Checklist Weiterbildung, Ein Web-basierter Katalog von Qualitätskriterien für Bildungsinteressierte in Schlögl, P. and Gruber, E. (2003) *Wo geht's hier zum richtigen Kurs? Entscheidungshilfe für die Auswahl eines Kursangebot in der allgemeinen und beruflichen Erwachsenenbildung*. Österreichisches Institut für Berufsbildungsforschung-Öibf.

Grubb, W.N. (2007) Lifelong Learning in Austria: The view from OECD\_grubb\_BadIschl\_2007.

Grubb, W. N. and Gardner, O. (2007) *Lifelong Learning in Austria: The View From OECD*. Prepared for the Bad Ischler Dialog des Österreichischen Socialpartner Bad Ischl, Austria October 3-4.

Gruber, E. (2003) Die TeilnehmerInnen als Kudinnen- Ein Erwachsenenpädagogischer Diskurs in Schlögl, P. and Gruber, E (2003) *Wo geht's hier zum richtigen Kurs? Entscheidungshilfe für die Auswahl eines Kursangebot in der allgemeinen und beruflichen Erwachsenenbildung*. Österreichisches Institut für Berufsbildungsforschung-Öibf.

GTCE (2010) *Teaching Quality Policy Paper*; Code of Conduct and Practice for Registered Teachers, General teaching Council for England, London.

Goleman, D. (1995) *Emotional intelligence* New York: Bantam Books.

Goodson, I. and Hargreaves, A. (1996) *Teachers' Professional Lives*. London: Falmer Press.

Guba, E.G. and Lincoln, Y.S. (1994) Competing paradigms in qualitative research, in: Denzin, N.K. and Lincoln, Y.S. (eds.), *Handbook of qualitative research*, SAGE Publications: Thousand Oaks.

Guskey, T. R. (2000) *Evaluating Professional Development*, London: SAGE.

Guskey, T. R. (2002) Professional development and teacher change. *Teachers and Teaching* 8, 381-391.

Guskey, T. R. (2003) What makes professional development effective? In *Phi Delta Kappan*, 84(10), 748-750.

Hackl, W. and Friesenbichler, B. (2014) *Adult Education in Austria*: Country information. [www.educon.co.at](http://www.educon.co.at)

Habermas, J. (1972) *Knowledge and Human Interests*, trans. J. Shapiro, London: Heinemann.

Habermas, J. (1974) *Theory and Practice*, trans. J. Viertel, London: Heinemann.

Hammersley, M. (2007) 'Educational Research and Teaching: a response to David Hargreaves', pp.18–42 in Hammersley, M. (2007) *Educational Research and Evidence-Based Practice*, The Open University, UK: SAGE Publications.

Hammersley, M., Gomm, R., Woods, P., Faulkner, D., Swann, J., Baker, S., Bird, M., and Carty, J. (2007) *Research Methods in Education*, Milton Keynes, Open University.

Hammersley, M. and Atkinson, P. (2007) *Ethnography: Principle in Practice, (Third edition)*, London: Routledge

Hargreaves, A. and Goodson, I. F. (Eds.) (1996) *Teachers' professional lives, Aspirations and Actualities*, London: Falmer Press.



Harris, A., Nigel, B., and Preedy, M. (1997) Organizational effectiveness and improvement in education, Open University, Routledge.

Harris, A. (2001) Building the Capacity for School Improvement, *School Leadership and Management*, 21 (3), 261-270.

Harris, A. (2003) Building leadership capacity for school improvement, Open University Press: Mc Graw-Hill Education, Berkshire, England.

Harris, A. (2003) Teacher leadership as distributed leadership, *School Leadership and Management*, 23 (3), 313-324.

Hart, R. A. (1992) Childrens' participation: From Tokenism to Citizenship, *Innocenti Eassys*, No. 4.

Hellawell, D. (2006) Inside-out: Analysis of Insider-Outsider Concept as Heuristic Device to Develop Reflexivity in Students Doing qualitative Research' *Teaching in Higher Education*, Vol 11 No.4 pp 438-494.

Hellawell, D. and Hancock, N. (2001) Between Hierarchical Control and Collegiality, the academic middle manager in Higher education in *Effective Educational Leadership*, The Open University: UK.

Hemmer, S. (2014) Finding Time for Quality Teaching, Ethnographic Study of Academic Workload in the Social Sciences and their Impact on Teaching Practice, *Higher Education Research and development*, 33, 3, 483-495.

Hodkinson, P. (1998) Technicism, Teachers and Teaching Quality in Vocational and Training, *Journal of Vocational Education and Training*, 50,2, 198-208.

Hodkinson, P. and Macleod, F. (2010) 'contrasting concepts of learning and contrasting research methodologies: affinities and bias' *British Educational Research Journal*, vol. 36, no. 2, pp. 173-89.

Hodgson, S. (2004) Cutting through the silence. A sociological Construction of Self-injury, *Sociological Inquiry*, 74(2), 162-179.

Hofstede, G. (1991) Culture and organisations, Software of the mind, London: McGraw-Hill.

Holden, G. (1997) Challenge and support: the role of the critical friend in continuing professional development. *Curriculum Journal*, 8(3), 441-481

Hollins, E. R. (2011) The meaning of culture in learning to teach, The power of socialization and identity formation in A. F. Ball and C. A. Tyson (Eds.), *Studying diversity in teacher education*, New York: Rowan & Littlefield.

Holton, J. A. (2010) The Coding Process and Its Challenges. *The Grounded Theory Review Vol. 9. No 1.*

Hughes, J., Jewson, N., and Unwin, L. (2007) *Communities of Practice, Critical Perspective*, Routledge 2 Park Square Milton Park Abingdon, Ox 14.

Hustler, D., McNamara, O., Jarvis, J., Sondra, M., Campbell, A., and Howson, J. (2003) *Teachers' Perceptions of Continuing Professional Development*, Research Report: London, DfES.

Illeris, K. (2004) *The three dimensions of learning: Contemporary learning theory in the tension field between the cognitive, the emotional and the social*, Leicester, NIACE.

Irvine, A. (2010) *Realities Toolkit: Using Phone Interviews*. ESRC National Centre for Research Methods, Social Policy Unit, University of New York.

Jarvis, P. (1990) *An International Dictionary of Adult and continuing Education*, Mackay of Chatham PLC: UK.

Jarvis, P. (1992) *Perspectives on Adult Education and Training in Europe*, National Institute of Adult Learning Education (England and Wales).

Jarvis, P. (1995) *Adult and continuing education: Theory and practice*, London: Routledge.

Jarvis, P. (2010) *Education and Lifelong Learning: Theory and Practice*, Routledge: UK.

Johnson, G. and Scholes, K. (2002, 6th edition) *Exploring Corporate Strategy*, London, Financial Times/Prentice Hall.

Jupp, R. (2001) 'Open learning', *ATL Report, (March)*, pp. 12–13.

Keltner, D., Gruenfeld, D. H. and Anderson, C. (2003) Power, Approach, and Inhibition. *Psychological Review* 110:265–84

Kemmis, S. (1988) *Action Research* in M. Hammersley (2007) *Educational research and evidence-based practice*. London: SAGE.

Knowles, M. S. (1970) *The modern practice of adult education*. New York, Association Press.

Knowles, M. S. (1973) *The Adult Learner, A Neglected Species*, Houston, Gulf.

Knowles, M. S. (1980) *The Modern Practice of Adult Education, From Pedagogy to Andragogy*, Englewood, California: National Centre for Vocational Education Research (NCVER).

Knowles, M. S. (1984) *Andragogy in Action*, San Francisco, Jossey-Bass Inc.

Kolb, D. (1984) *Learning Styles Inventory* in Lowy, A. and Hood, P. (2004) *The*

*Power of 2x2 Matrix, Using 2x2 Thinking to Solve Business Problems and Make Better Decisions*, Jossey-Bass, San Francisco, CA.

Kvale, S. (1996) Interviews: An introduction to qualitative research interviewing. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications.

Kvale, S. (2006) Dominance through Interviews and Dialogues, *Qualitative Inquiry* Volume 12 Number 3, PP 480-500.

Lampert, M. and Graziani, F. (2009) Instructional Activities as a Tool for Teachers' and Teacher Educators' Learning, *Elementary School Journal*, v109 n5 p491-509.

Lankard, B. (1993) Part-time Instructors in Adult and Vocational Education, [www.eric.ed-gv](http://www.eric.ed-gv)

Laroache, L. (2003) Managing successfully across cultures. Boston. Butterworth-Heinemann.

Lassnigg, L. and Schneeberger, A. (1997) Thematic Review of the Translation form Initial Education to Working Life. [www.oecd.org/Austria/190822.Pdf](http://www.oecd.org/Austria/190822.Pdf)

Lassnigg, L. (2011) Contradictions in adult education structures and policies in Austria: their interrelation with the professional development of educators, *European Journal for Research on the Education and Learning of Adults*, 04/2011, 2:37-55.

Lassnigg, L. and Schmid, K. (2014) Unemployment and Competence Erosion. Towards a sophisticated way of regarding the PIAAC findings of the “unemployed” in *Austria in Skills of adults; Insufficient response to PIAAC?*

Laws, K and McLeod, R. (2006) Case study and grounded theory, sharing some alternative qualitative research methodologies with systems professionals. (Accessed on line on 23th October 2013).

Leithwood, K. (2001) ‘School leadership in the context of accountability policies’, *International Journal of Leadership in Education*, 4(3), pp. 217–35.

Lewin, K. (1946) Action Research and Minority. *J. Soc. Issues*, 2(4) 34-46.

Lewin, K. (1952) Group Decision and Social Change in Swanson, G. E., Newcombs, T. M., and Hartley, E. L. (eds) *Readings in Social Psychology*, Holt, New York, pp 459-73.

Lincoln, Y. S. and Guba, E. G. (2000) 'Paradigmatic Controversies, Contradictions, and Emerging Confluences' in Denzin, N.K. and Lincoln, Y.S. [Eds.] *the Handbook of Qualitative Research*, pp. 163-188, SAGE, Beverly Hills, CA.

Livneh, C. and Livneh, H. (1999) Continuing professional development among educators, predictors of participation in learning activities, *Adult Education Quarterly*, 49, 91-106.

Lokman, I. M. (2006) Email Interviewing in Qualitative Research, A methodological discussion, *Journal of American Society for Information Science and Technology*.

Looney, J. (2011) Developing High-quality teachers: teacher evaluation for improvement, *European Journal of Education Vol 46, No. 4; 2011*.

Lupou, R., Nuissl, E., and Sava, S. (2010) Credibility of Trainers Competence Assessment, *Procedia Social and Behavioural Science 2*.

MacGregor, R. R. (2007) The Essential Practices of High Quality Teaching and Learning, The Center for Educational Effectiveness, [www.effectiveness.org](http://www.effectiveness.org)

Magee J.C, and Galinsky, A. D. (2008) Social Hierarchy: The Self-reinforcing Nature of Power and Status. *Academic Management Annual 2:351–98*

Maier, K. (2003) Qualitätskonzept und Instrumente in der Erwachsenenbildung unter besonderer Berücksichtigung der TeilnehmerInnen.

Marshall, M.N. (1996) The Key Informant Technique. *Family Practice*, 13:92-97.

Marshall, A. and Batten, S. (2004) Researching Across Cultures, *Issues of Ethics and Power, Volume 5, No. 3, Art. 39 – September 2004*.

Martyniuk, W. and Slivensky, S. (2012) Empowering language professionals– the contribution of the European Centre for Modern Languages in Graz to innovation in language teaching and learning.

Maslow, A. (1943) *A Theory of Human Motivation*, *Psychological Review* 50 (4) 370–96.

Maslow, A. (1954) *Motivation and Personality*, New York: Harper and Row.

Maslow, A. (1970) *Motivation and Personality*, p. 236, New York: Harper.

Maykut, P. and Morehouse, R. (2005) Beginning Qualitative Research, A philosophical and practical Guide, The Falmer Press Teachers' Library: London.

McGrath, V. (2009) Reviewing the Evidence on how Adult Students Learn: An Examination of Knowles' Model of Andragogy. [Files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ860562.pdf](http://Files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ860562.pdf)

Merriam, S. B. (1998) *Qualitative research and case study applications in education* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers.

Merriam, S. (2014) The changing landscape of adult learning theory in Comings, J. and Smith, C. (eds) *Review of adult learning and literacy, Connecting research, policy and practice pp. 199-220*, Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Mezirow, J. (1997) Transformative learning, Theory to practice in Cranton, P. (Ed.), *Transformative learning in action, Insights from practice – New directions for adult and continuing education*, No. 74 (pp. 5-12), San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Miles, M. and Huberman, A. M. (1984) *Qualitative Data Analysis*, Beverly Hills, CA: SAGE.

Miles, M. and Huberman, A. M. (1994) *Qualitative Data Analysis* (2<sup>nd</sup> Edition) USA: SAGE.

Misra, P. K. (2011) VET Teachers in Europe: Policies, Practices and Challenges, *Journal of Vocational Education and Training* 63:1, 27-45.

Moustakas, C. (1994) *Phenomenological research methods*, Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE.

NIACE (2012) *Managing Challenging Behaviour Within Skills Provision for the Unemployed Adults*, Published by The National Institute of Adult Continuing Education (England and Wales): Leicester.

Nurjannah, I., Mills, J., Park, T., and Usher, K. (2014) Conducting Grounded Theory Study in a language other than English, Procedures for ensuring the integrity of translation, DOI: 10.1177/2158244014528920.

OECD (1994) *Quality in Teaching*, Centre for educational and research and Innovation: France.

OECD (2002) *Education at a Glance*: Paris.

OECD (2004a) *Thematic Review on Adult learning. Country Report Austria*: <http://www.oecd.org/right>

OECD (2004b) *The Quality of the Teaching Workforce*: Paris.

OECD (2007) *Higher Education Management and Policy. Journal of the programme on Institutional management in Higher education*, Vol. 19, no 2.

OECD (2009) *Education at a Glance*, [www.oecd.org/32/34/43541373](http://www.oecd.org/32/34/43541373)

OECD (2010) *Education at a Glance*, [www.oecd.org](http://www.oecd.org)

OECD (2012) *Fostering quality teaching in Higher Education: Policies and Practices*: Paris.

O'Neil, J. (2007) *Managing through Teams in Leading People and Teams in Education*, Open University, UK.

Patton, M. Q. (1990) *Qualitative Research and Evaluation Methods (PP. 169-186)* Beverly Hills, CA: SAGE.

- Patton, M. Q. (2002) *Qualitative Research and Evaluation methods* (3rd ed.) Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications, Inc.
- Plowright, D. (2012) *Using mixed methods. Framework for an integrated methodology*, SAGE: London
- Polanyi, M. (1967) *The tacit dimension*, Garden City, NY: Doubleday.
- Popkewitz, T. (1984) Paradigm and ideology in educational research, social functions of the intellectual, London and New York: Falmer Press.
- Ried, R. (1995) Teaching and Learning with Unemployed People to Generate Confidence and Success, *Journal of National Bulletin of Good Practice in Adult and Community Education No.3*.
- Pratt, D. D. (2005) *Five perspectives on teaching in adult and higher education* Krieger Publishing, Malabar: Florida.
- Prior, L. (2003) *Using Documents in Social Research*, London: SAGE.
- Rogers, C.R. (1951) *Client Centered Therapy*, Boston Houghton Mifflin Co.
- Rogers, C. R. (1956) Becoming a Person. *Pastoral Psychology*, 7, 9-13.
- Rogers, C. R. (1969) *Freedom to learn, a view of what education might become*, Columbus, OH: Charles E. Merrill.
- Rogers, A. (2003) What's the difference? There is no essential difference between the ways in which adults and children learn, but there are profound differences between teaching young people and teaching adults. *Adults Learning*, 15, 15-17.
- Roloff, M.E, and Cloven, D. H. (1990) The Chilling Effect in Interpersonal Relationships: The Reluctance to Speak One's Mind. In: Cahn D. D, editor. *Intimates in conflict: A communication perspective pp. 49–76* Hillsdale, NJ: Erlbaum.
- Rose, J. and Reynolds, D. (2008) Teachers Continuing Professional Development, Rooting Practice in the Classroom, *Int. J. of Management in Education*, 2008 Vol.2, No.1, pp.14 – 29.
- Rose, J. and Reynolds, D. (2009) Teachers Continuing Professional Development, A New Approach, *20<sup>th</sup> Annual World ICSEI*, U. K.
- Rossmann, G. B. and Rallis, S. F. (1998) Learning in the field, an introduction to qualitative research, Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE.
- Rossmann, G. B. and Rallis, S. F. (2003) Learning in the field: An introduction to qualitative research (2<sup>nd</sup> Edition), Thousand Oaks CA: SAGE.

Rowe, K. (2003) The importance of teacher quality as key determinant of student's experience and outcomes of schooling, Australia council for educational Research. [http:// research.acer.edu.au/research\\_Conference\\_2003/3](http://research.acer.edu.au/research_Conference_2003/3).

Rubin, H. & Rubin, I. (1995) *Qualitative interviewing, The art of hearing data*. Thousands Oak: SAGE.

Sarfati, H. (2013) Coping with Unemployment Crisis in Europe, *Journal of International Labour Review*, Vol. 152, No. 1.

Sava, S. and Lupou, R. (2009) The Adult Educator in Europe- Professionalization Challenges and the Alternative of Validation of Learning Outcome. *Procedia Social and Behavioural Science* 1.

Schneeberger, A. (2006) Skills for the Knowledge and Service Society, Trends Determining Future Pre-Service and In-Service VET Needs, *European Journal of Vocational Training*, v38 n2 p6-23 May-Aug 2006, ERIC.

Schlögl, P. and Gruber, E. (2003) *Wo geht's hier zum richtigen Kurs? Entscheidungshilfe für die Auswahl eines Kursangebot in der allgemeinen und beruflichen Erwachsenenbildung*. Österreichisches Institut für Berufsbildungsforschung-Öibf.

Schofield, J. (2007) 'Increasing the Generalizability of Qualitative Research' in Hammersley, M. (2007) *Educational Research and Evidence-Based Practice*, The Open University: SAGE.

Schön, D. (1983) *The Reflective Practitioner*, London: Temple Smith.

Scrivener, J. (2009) *Learning Teaching: A Guidebook for English Language Teachers*, (Second edition) Macmillan.

Silverman, D. (1993) "Beginning Research" *Interpreting Qualitative Data Methods for Analysing Talk, Text and Interaction*, Londres: SAGE Publications.

Silverman, D. (2000) *Doing Qualitative Research. A practical handbook*, London: SAGE.

Silverman, D. (2005) *Doing Qualitative Research. A practical handbook (2<sup>nd</sup> Edition)* London: SAGE.

Silverman, D. (2011) *Interpreting Qualitative Data, (4<sup>th</sup> edition)*, London: SAGE.

Skinner, B. F. (1953) *Science and Human Behaviour*, New York: Macmillan.

Smith, R. M. (2000) "It doesn't count because it's subjective!" (Re) conceptualising the inductive researcher role as "validity" embraces subjectivity. IN AL., W. E. (Ed.) *Being, seeking, telling: expressive approaches to inductive adult education research*. Flaxton, QLD, Post Pressed.

Smith, E. M. (2005) Telephone interviewing in healthcare research, A summary of the evidence, *Nurse Researcher* 12(3): 32–41, [[PubMed](#)].

Steinmayer, P. (2009) The Austrian Academy of Continuing Education, *A Pioneering European Model Takes Stock*, *National Affairs Article*.

Stenhouse, L. (1975) *An Introduction to Curriculum Research and Development*. London: Heinemann.

Stentzel, M. (1986) *Lernschwierigkeiten von Erwachsenen in der beruflichen Weiterbildung*, Peter Lang: Frankfurt.

Stern, P. N. (1994) Eroding Grounded Theory in Morse, J. M. (Ed.), *Critical issues in qualitative research methods* (pp. 212-223), Thousand Oaks, California: SAGE.

Stoll, L. and Seashore, L. K. (2007) *Professional Learning Communities, Divergence, Depth and Dilemmas*: McGraw-Hill Education (UK).

Stoll, L. (2008) *School Culture and Improvement in Strategic leadership and Educational Improvement*, The Open University: UK.

Stoll, L., Harris, A., and Graham, H. (2012) Great Professional Development Which Leads to Great pedagogy, Nine Claims from Research, *Research and Development Network National Themes, Theme Two*.

Strong, M. (2011) *The Highly Qualified Teacher: What Is Teacher Quality and How Do We Measure It?* Teachers College Columbia University. [Http://store.tcpress.com/08077-52258.shtml](http://store.tcpress.com/08077-52258.shtml)

Strauss, A. and Corbin, J. (1994) "Grounded theory methodology: an overview" in Denzin, N.K. and Lincoln, Y.S. (eds.), *Handbook of Qualitative Research*, pp. 273-285, London, Thousand Oaks: SAGE.

Stronge, H. J., Ward, T. J., and Grant, L.W. (2011) What makes good teachers good? A cross analysis of the connection between teacher effectiveness and student achievement, *Journal of Teacher Education* 62 (4) 339-355 (Accessed 10<sup>th</sup> July, 2013).

Stronge, J. H. (2002) *Qualities of effective teachers*, Alexandria, V. A. Association for Supervision and Curriculum.

Stake, R. E. (1995) *The Art of Case Study research*, Thousands Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications.

Strauss, A. and Corbin, J. (1990) *Basics of Qualitative Research, Grounded Theory Procedures and Techniques*, London: SAGE.



Temple, B. (1997) Watch your Tongue: Issues in Translation and cross-cultural Research. *Sociology* 21, 31: 607-618

Temple, B. and Young, A. (2004) Qualitative research and translation dilemmas, *Qualitative Research* 4, 161-178 Doi: 10.1177/1468794104044430 (Accessed 7<sup>th</sup> July, 2016).

Temple, B. (2008) Narrative analysis of written text, Reflexivity in cross language research, *Qualitative Research* 8:355-365.

Tuckman, B. and Jensen, M. (1977) 'Stages of small group development revisited', *Groups and Organisational Studies*, 2, pp. 419–27.

Van Manen, M. (1990) *Researching lived experience, Human science for an action sensitive pedagogy*, Albany, NY: State University of New York Press.

Volmari, K., Helakorpi, S. and Frimodt, R. (2009) Competence Framework for VET Professions, *A Handbook for Practitioners*, (CEDEFOP).

Vygotsky, Lev. (1997) *Interaction between Learning and Development*: W.H. Freeman and Company: New York.

Weber, F., Hiebic, D. and Friedl-Schafferhaus, M. (2012) Anforderungen an TrainerInnen. Endbericht an den niederösterreichischen beschäftigungspakt, bmask.

Wagner, B. (2009) Kulturelle Übersetzung. Erkundungen über ein wanderndes Konzept, on, [www.kakanien.ac.at/beitr/postcol](http://www.kakanien.ac.at/beitr/postcol), Printer Version in Babka, A. (ed.) *Dritte Räume, Homi K. Bhabhas Kulturtheorie, Anwendung, Kritik, Reflexion*, Vienna: Turia & Kant (forthcoming).

Wenger, E. (1998) *Communities of practice, Learning, meaning, and identity*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

Wenger, E. (2006) Communities of Practice, a brief introduction, <http://www.ewenger.com/theory/index.htm> (Accessed 1st September, 2013).

Wenger, E., McDermott, R., and Sydnt, W. M. (2002) *Cultivating communities of practice*, Harvard Business School Press, Boston Massachusetts.

[www.ams.at/doc/001\\_fks\\_liste](http://www.ams.at/doc/001_fks_liste). Puff

[www.ehea.info/uploads/%28%29/Bucharest%20communique%2012%28%29.pdf](http://www.ehea.info/uploads/%28%29/Bucharest%20communique%2012%28%29.pdf)

[www. Statistik Austria.at](http://www.Statistik Austria.at)

Yin, R. K. (1994) *Case Study Research: Design and Methods (2<sup>nd</sup> edition)*, London: SAGE.

Yin, R. K. (2003) *Case Study Research: Design and Methods (3<sup>rd</sup> edition)*, London: SAGE.

Yin, R. K. (2009) Case Study Research: *Design and Methods (4<sup>th</sup> edition)*, Thousand Oaks CA: SAGE.

Yoshioka, R. B. (2007) Part-Time Faculty in California: Successes, Challenges, and Future Issues, *New directions for Community Colleges*, 140: 7.

Zboraskli, K. and Gemünden, H. G. (2006) The Impact of Communities of Practice, Berlin University of Technology Germany-Idea Groups Inc.

## **Appendices**

### **Appendix 1: Informed consent form and sample letter to participants**

#### Participants Information Sheet

Dear Participant,

Thank you for your interest to take part in this research. Please find details of the project and information for you to consider if you agree to take part.

#### **The research project**

This research is being conducted to meet the requirements of my Doctorate in Education degree. I am interested in improving teaching quality of adult educators in my research entitled: 'Leading and managing the staff for improved and sustained performance in a vocational college'. I want to know how stakeholders think teaching quality can be enhanced and I would like to obtain suggestions on what would characterise an effective Continuing Professional Development programme for trainers. It is my hope that these suggestions will be useful to my colleagues, the management, planners and administrators.

#### **Your part in the research**

As a participant in this research you will be asked to take part in either an interview, or to complete a questionnaire.

## **Interviews**

Interviews will be one-to-one conversations not lasting more than 35 minutes. Interviews could be conducted over the telephone, E-mails or face-to-face. These will be semi-structured interviews in which I will ask general questions and hope that you will express your opinions freely. If you agree I would like to hear about your opinion on the research topic. The interviews will be audio-recorded if you allow

## **Questionnaires**

Qualitative questionnaires will require respondents to make full answers in their own words, which will be written on the questionnaire sheet by respondents.

## **Confidentiality**

In keeping with the ethical guidelines of the Open University UK, participants' confidentiality will be assured. Your identity will be protected and data will be securely stored in a manner that only allows access by authorised persons. Your identity and that of the school will not be disclosed. You may see the transcriptions of what you say, and permit what can be included in the thesis.

### **The right to withdraw**

Your participation in the research is fully voluntary and you may withdraw any time you feel like. You may request destruction of the data you have given.

### **Potential Benefit to Participants**

I hope this research will produce insight for the development of trainer and adult education in Vocational Colleges in Austria and in particular useful ideas on how to strengthen continuing development programmes for trainers.

Please feel free to contact me at any time if you have questions about your involvement in this project that I have not adequately addressed.

Esther Kieberger

School of Education

Open University

Milton Keynes

UK

Email: [esther.k@live.com](mailto:esther.k@live.com) Phone: (43) 69912780807

## **Consent Form for Participants**

**Project title:** Leading and managing staff for improved and sustained Performance in a Vocational College

**Researcher's name:** Esther Kieberger

**Supervisors' names:** Dr Jan Moreland and Dr Janet Harvey

I understand that

- · I have read the Participant Information Sheet and the nature and purpose of the research project has been explained to me. I understand and agree to take part.
- · I understand the purpose of the research project and my involvement in it.
- · I understand that I may withdraw from the research project at any stage and that this will not affect my status now or in the future.
- · I understand that while information gained during the study may be published, I will not be identified and my personal results will remain confidential.
- · I understand that data will be stored in hard and electronic transcripts in a secure place. Access will be limited to the researcher and research supervisors.

**Signed** .....

(Research Participant)

**Print name** .....

**Date** .....

**Organisation.**

**Position**

.....

**Contact details**

Researcher: [esther.k@live.com](mailto:esther.k@live.com) Phone (0043) 69912780807

## Appendix 2: Developmental interview schedules

*Table A.1 Interview schedule phase 1 of data collection*

<b>Adult education/teaching quality</b>
1. Tell me, how long have you been teaching?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What got you involved in teaching adults?</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Can you tell me a little about your background and experience in your field?</li> </ul>
2. How would you define adult education?
3. Are there any differences in your approach to teaching a class of adults versus younger students?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>If so, can you be specific for example, class activities, assignments, syllabus, deadlines, etc.?</li> </ul>
4. How do you find teaching the unemployed/employed learner?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Is teaching the adult with this particular background the same as teaching school children?</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What is their attitude to learning for the younger one/older ones?</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Are they happy with learning?</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How do they react to discussions/group work/assignments?</li> </ul>



5.What do you enjoy most about teaching adults?
6.What do you enjoy least about teaching adults?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How do you deal with difficulties?</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Do you ever discuss the difficulties with colleagues?</li> </ul>
7. Can you describe a time when you felt excited and satisfied as a trainer?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What aspects of the situation gave you satisfaction or excitement?</li> </ul>
8. Can you describe a time when you felt dissatisfied as a trainer?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What aspects of the situation were dissatisfying?</li> </ul>
9.What are the characteristics of effective teaching in adult education?
10. Can you tell me your opinion about quality teaching?
<b>Trainer quality</b>
11. If you were appointing a new trainer. What are the chief qualities and characteristics you would be looking for as evidence that this person would be a

good teacher?
12.How do you think the new trainer of adults can be helped to develop professional skills during their teaching career?
13.What skills/strategies have you developed during your teaching career of adults that have helped you to be an effective trainer of adults?
<b>Continuing Professional Development</b>
14.What kind of training have you received in teaching adults specifically?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What have you done to develop yourself as a trainer?</li> </ul>
15. What suggestions do you have, how the training of trainers can be improved to better prepare them to teach adults?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What are the areas of your teaching that you wish to improve?</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What do you need to improve?</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What kind of support do you expect from the management?</li> </ul>
16. What skills do you think a trainer needs to develop in order to be efficient?
17. Do you think Continuing Professional Development could help the trainers improve?

18. Please add anything more that you feel is important about your philosophy and practice of teaching adults that was not discussed.

**Table A.2 Follow-up Schedule for trainers who had left the institution**

<b>For interview 4 and 9</b>
Tell me how long you have been teaching?
What got you involved in teaching adults?
Can you tell me a little bit about your background and experience in your field?
Did you ever teach the unemployed learner, what was your experience?
What is the difference between the employed/unemployed learners?
Did you experience any challenges teaching this type of learner?
What is your opinion of quality teaching?
What suggestions would you make about how the trainers can be helped to improve?

**Table A.3 Phase 2 Interview schedule follow up interview questions**

For interview 12
1. How did you find teaching the unemployed/employed learner?

2. What was their attitude towards learning?
3. What do you think the reasons are for lack of engagement of some adult learners?
4. What did you enjoy least about teaching adults?
5. How did you deal with difficulties?
6. What suggestions can you make in order to improve the teaching of this type of learner?
7. What professional skills does a trainer need to develop in order to be effective?
8. Please add anything more that you feel is important about your belief and practice of teaching adults that was not discussed

***Table A.4 Phase 3 Interview Schedule***

<b>For interview 16 - 20</b>
Tell me how long you have been teaching?
What got you involved in teaching adults?
Can you tell me a little bit about your background and experience in your field?
What is your definition of adult education?
How did you find teaching the unemployed learner?
What was their attitude towards learning?
What are the peculiar challenges you have experienced in teaching adults?
What do you think are the reasons for lack of engagement of some adults in learning?
What kind of training have you received in teaching adults?

Do you think in-service training for adult trainers would be useful?
How can the training be improved to suit trainers of the unemployed adults?
According to you, What are the professional skills that a trainer of the unemployed people should have in order to cope?
What 'survival strategies' have you developed that have helped you to become an effective trainer of the unemployed people?
What support should a new trainer of adults receive so as to develop professional skills during their teaching career
What should characterise a trainers' professional development training?
How might a community of practice be formed or improved?

### Appendix 3: Initial coding

#### Extract from interview 1 transcript with initial coding

*Table A.5 Example of open-coding (line by line)*

<p>Researcher: Tell me how long have you been teaching?</p> <p>Ceebie: I have been teaching for 7 years. I started teaching as a way to work outside of my home country. I chose adults as some years previous I had worked as a substitute teacher in an American elementary school and just found that without adequate knowledge of child psychology it was too much for me to handle a classroom full of children. I began by getting an online teaching certificate from ITTT. This gave me no practical experience but a bit of knowledge of how to teach general English. I then took a job teaching general English in Istanbul, Turkey that mostly involved grammar. After two years I moved to Vienna, Austria where I took the CELTA course and completed with a pass A. I have now been teaching Communicate English in an ESP (English for Special Purposes) setting.</p>	<p>Teaching as a way to get out</p> <p>Choosing adults</p> <p>Working as a substitute teacher</p> <p>Having no adequate knowledge</p> <p>Getting online teaching certificate</p> <p>Gaining no practical experience</p> <p>Teaching general English</p> <p>Moving to Vienna</p> <p>Doing a CELTA course</p> <p>Teaching Communicative</p>
<p>Researcher: What got you involved in teaching adults?</p> <p>Ceebie: Teaching adults has been different but as I stated before I had no specific training for dealing with children in a classroom. There is a basic level of respect and responsibility that I expect from adults that allows me to operate under the assumption that they will reasonably follow all instructions and assignments given.</p>	<p>Teaching adult is different</p> <p>Having no specific training for children</p> <p>Having basic respect and responsibility</p> <p>Operating under assumptions</p>

<p>Researcher: How do you find teaching the unemployed /employed learner?</p> <p>I do not currently teach unemployed adults <b>but I did previously</b> teach a few of these classes. I found that <b>experience with them varied depending on their socio-economic background and their reasons for being unemployed.</b> The biggest difference from dealing with employed students, however, was that they tended to need more basic grammar and job finding skills. <b>The adult student in general is very motivated in their approach to the coursework</b> as they have specifically <b>chosen to take these courses</b> and often times are <b>paying for it themselves.</b> Also adding to this motivation is that the adult learner <b>has had more life experience</b> often contributing to a general over all <b>work ethics.</b></p>	<p>Teaching unemployed adults</p> <p>Varying experiences</p> <p>Depending on socio-economic background</p> <p>Dealing with employed students</p> <p>Tending to need basic grammar/ job finding skills</p> <p>Motivated</p> <p>Paying for courses</p> <p>Having life experiences and work ethics</p>
----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

KEY:

**Yellow** = Reasons for teaching adults and personal experience

**Cyan** = Trainers' views of the adult learner

**Green** = Assumptions of learning

**Nagenta** = Previous experience of teaching unemployed learners

**Red** = Challenges of unemployed learners

**Grey** = Employed learners

#### **Appendix 4: A few examples of initial and focused codes, extract 1**

Codes that emerged from line-by-line coding were then put in tables for each participant. Each interview was numbered 1-20, and first letter of the pseudo name was used for identification.

***Table A.7 Initial codes***

***Focused codes***

<p>No experience</p> <p>No practical experience</p> <p>No specific training</p> <p>Teaching as a way to get outside of my home country.</p>	<p><b>Reasons for teaching adults</b></p>
<p>Teaching general English in Turkey</p> <p>Worked as a substitute teacher in an elementary school</p> <p>Having no adequate experience of child psychology</p>	<p><b>Personal experience</b></p>
<p>Getting online teaching</p> <p>Moving to Vienna</p> <p>Doing CELTA course</p> <p>Teaching communicative English</p> <p>Colleagues are a great resource for</p>	<p><b>Gaining experience</b></p>



<p>lessons</p> <p>Attending conferences and workshops</p> <p>Using students as resources</p>	
<p>Having basic respect and responsibility</p> <p>Having the assumptions they will reasonably follow instructions and assignments given</p>	<b>Trainers' opinion of the adult learner</b>
<p>Varying depending on socio-economic and reasons for being unemployed</p>	<b>Experience of the unemployed learner</b>
<p>Tending to need basic grammar, job finding skills, motivated, choosing the course, paying for, having more life experience, contributing to general work ethic,</p> <p>Maintaining focus and drive,</p> <p>Quite motivated, approaching course with level of dedication, personal responsibility</p>	<b>Experience of the employed learner</b>

Focusing on positive reinforcement, fostering of confidence, Teaching language accuracy, focusing on effective communication, Teaching topical and relevant subjects to student career	<b>How I teach</b>
Experiencing real problems, job responsibilities getting in the way, many cancellations and postponements, Hampering the learners' ability to make progress	<b>Encountering difficulties</b>
Colleagues sharing their various issues and tips and strategies	<b>Sharing with colleagues</b>
Using specific vocabulary and language	<b>Notable changes in learners</b>
Inspiring confidence in the student, activating their existing language, Aiming at increasing their confidence, building on what they already know	<b>The trainers experience in the class</b>
Training, preparation and personal	<b>Trainers' opinion of quality teaching</b>

confidence	
<p>Use student as a source of resource</p> <p>Continuing teacher development</p> <p>Use colleagues as a great source for lessons</p> <p>Attending conferences and workshops</p>	<b>Advise to new trainers</b>
<p>Very good at building creative lessons, basing on pop culture and media</p> <p>Keeping learners motivated and interested, having fun</p>	<b>The teacher I most admire</b>
<p>Development of patience, understanding how long things take to set in,</p> <p>Expecting a busy student, trying to balance work and home life with a language course</p>	<b>Professional skills developed over the years</b>
<p>Taking appropriate training course such as CELTA</p> <p>In-company training institutes to provide regular sessions and workshops, giving</p>	<b>Recommendations for trainers</b>

their trainers new techniques, showing areas of focus within the field that are cutting edge	
Reaching a comfortable level, (This is an example of a freelancer working as a private trainer in a company) Spent time preparing	<b>Personal improvements</b>
Expecting full support from the management, dealing with clients that are inconsistent, dealing with companies that expect unrealistic results	<b>Support form management</b>
Good at assessing the needs of their students, managing the participants wants	<b>Expectations of a good trainer</b>

## Appendix 5: Examples of selected codes

From the numerous codes, focused codes were selected leading to the theme Peculiar challenges of teaching the unemployed learner. The initial letter stands for the name of the interviewee where the code emerged. L stands for Leroy,

C-Ceebie, S-Selena, B-Bitu, T-Thomas, A-Andario, BE-Beccare, SY-Sylvia, SO-Solare, K-Kurt , M-Maria, CY-Cynthia, MM-Marilyn, D-Doris, Z-Zaina, Leroy, A-Annalore, Selena, T-Tiffany, Solare, CY-Cynthia

Three participants were re-interviewed: Selena, Solare and Cynthia

**Table A.7 Challenges of teaching the unemployed learner**

• Adult education in New Star Vocational College L
• Adult learner (young versus old) C, S
• Differences in teaching adults (city versus countryside) M
• Teaching adults of various ages CY, Z
• How adults learn B, A, BE, SO / Approach to teaching adults D, Z
• Teaching the unemployed learner D, Z
• Having socio-economic reasons for being unemployed C, S
• Peculiar challenges of teaching the unemployed learner L, S, T, CY
• Going through motions off being unemployed L
• Attitude to learning S, B, BE, SO, K, M, MM, Z
• Differences in learning based on personalities M
• Experience of the unemployed learner C, S, B, A, BE

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The PES send me (all interviews)</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Having forgotten to learn/study or never really knew how M, T</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lack of engagement for some adults in learning M, MM, D, L</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Feeling unsuccessful (was mentioned by all, the differences are in the examples mentioned)</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Contrasting the unemployed with the employed learner C, S, BE, K, M</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Encountering difficulties C1, S, CY</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Challenges of teaching the adult learner A, SY, M</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Challenges for the adult learner SO, D</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Having a very difficult man and dissatisfying behaviour BE</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Adult learners with learning disabilities and having bad experiences in school B</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reasons for drop-outs SY</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dealing with difficulties S, B, A, SO, M, MM</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Having traumatic experiences D</li> </ul>

## **Appendix 6: Student questionnaire in original language (German)**

### **Fragebogen für TeilnehmerInnen**

Wir bedanken uns für Ihre Bereitschaft diesen kurzen Fragebogen auszufüllen. Bitte beantworten Sie die folgenden Fragen ausführlich. Sie können ein zusätzliches Blatt verwenden wenn Sie mehr schreiben wollen. Dieser Fragebogen ist anonym und Ihre Antworten werden vertraulich behandelt.

#### **Daten**

Bitte ankreuzen

I Alter

☐ Unter 25

☐ 25- 35

☐ 35-45

☐ Über 45

II Geschlecht

☐ Männlich

☐ Weiblich

III Welcher Kurs besuchen Sie? (In welchem Projekt sind Sie)(In welchem akademischen Programm sind Sie registriert)

IV Wie oft haben Sie weiterbildende Kurse besucht?

☐ Erste Mal

☐ Mehr als zwei Male

V Welche anerkannte Ausbildung haben Sie erworben seit Sie die Pflichtschule beendet haben?

**Table A.8 Fragen**

1. Können Sie sich an ihre beste Erfahrung im Lernen erinnern? Wie würden Sie sie beschreiben?
2. Wenn Sie an gute Trainerinnen denken, an welche Qualitäten denken Sie?
3. Was bedeutet für Sie „Qualitätstraining“?
4. In Bezug auf Qualität gibt es für Sie einen Unterschied zwischen Teilzeit und Vollzeit beschäftigte Trainerinnen? Wenn ja, welchen Unterschied haben Sie beobachten können?
5. Als Erwachsener was brauchen Sie von einer anerkannten Ausbildung?
6. Welche Fähigkeiten, Kennzeichen, Ausstattung sollten diejenige, die Erwachsenen unterrichten haben?
7. Wie können Erwachsenenbildungsanbieter den Trainerinnen helfen die Qualität des Unterrichts zu verbessern?
8. In Bezug auf Frage 7 welche Überlegungen sollten für Trainerinnen gemacht werden?
9. Wenn Sie helfen konnten, ein Programm für die professionelle Entwicklung von Trainerinnen zu gestalten, was würden Sie in



Betracht ziehen?
Vielen Dank!

## **Student Questionnaire in English**

### **Qualitative Questionnaire for Students**

Thank you for agreeing to complete this short questionnaire.

Please answer the questions below as fully as you can. You may use extra paper if you would like to say more than the spaces allow. This questionnaire is anonymous and your answers will be treated confidentially.

### **Biographical Data**

Please indicate your

i. Age range

☐ Under 25 years

☐ 25-35 years

☐ 35-45 years

☐ Over 45 years

ii. Gender

☐ male

☐ female

iii. What course are you registered in currently?

---

---

iv. Is this your

☐ first time

☐ more than two times

v. What formal education have you participated in since you left school?

---

---

**Table A.9 Questions**

1. Can you describe a good learning experience that you had?
2. What are the qualities of a good trainer?
3. What do you think the word quality teaching means?
4. Do you think there is difference between full-time and part-time trainers? If you think so, what have you observed?
5. As an adult learner what do you expect from the institution?
6. What are the qualities that a trainer should have?
7. How can the management support the trainers to improve teaching quality?
8. What considerations could be made to improve trainer's teaching quality?
9. What suggestions can you make on the kind of professional development curriculum for trainers?

## **Appendix 7: Contact summary sheet 3**

### **Interview Number: 3**

**Name of Participant: Bitu**

**Age band: 45-50**

**Time and date: 13 p.m., 19/1/2015**

**Place: My house**

**Type of Interview: Face to Face interview**

#### **Description of the Interview:**

I had requested the participant to take part in the interview via email around October 2014. She was attending a CELTA course and promised to take part once she was through. So, she called to confirm the appointment. We held the meeting in my house as planned. I cooked lunch because the meeting was at 1 o'clock. We sat in a comfortable corner but before beginning the interview the participant had questions to ask concerning her own private affairs like legalisation of certificates, doing a Master degree in Education or MA which I happily explained.

#### **Interviewee 3**

Bitu 3 has teaching experience in secondary school education (she was a high school teacher in Zimbabwe). She had worked with me in the same college for 3 months but was made redundant and therefore decided to do the CELTA course to improve her chances in the labour market.

We began the interview at 13:30 and it lasted about 1 hour and 23 minutes, I recorded the interview.

**Observations:** She was quite jovial to answer the question, which were mostly answered from her experience and background knowledge as a trained teacher.

After the meeting she explained by giving further examples of her challenges of teaching the adult learner. Some of her comments are very touching:

- Some of the people have issues
- Language barrier (she could not understand a Chinese woman in her class because of the pronunciation and use of certain words, which led to frustration on the part of the learner.
- ‘Cases of absence were too much’- she always got the answer ‘ I am here because the PES sent me, I only came because I need the money (the unemployment benefits).
- Critic on CELTA course: The methods are too rigid - do not take account of the diversity in adult education. They imagine all learners are the same. She compared this to her experience of teaching adult learners where she was confronted with different learning styles, difficulties, which are not focused on in CELTA. In other words they only emphasis ‘ respect the learner’ and do not give home work
- There is a gap in the training methods and the actual reality in the classroom
- She felt that CELTA should offer more than that
- She promised to stay in contact for any follow-ups
- She also suggested 4 names of interviewees that I could contact who had attended the course

**Main themes that emerged:**

Like the first 2 interviews I did line-by-line coding and ended up with so many codes but identified the following which I added on to the codes from previous interviews:

- Encountering difficulties
- Sharing with colleagues
- Notable changes in learners
- The trainers experience in the classroom
- Advise to new trainers
- Need for personal improvements

These themes were notable in the first 2 interviews but stood out in this particular one.

**Follow-ups:**

Will get in touch with the suggested names.

**Literature search:**

To read more on adult learning theories

Look for more research to develop the Austrian context.

**Any remarks: Transcription, diary, ideas/reflections, and verbal clues...**

I decided to revise the codes of interview 1 and 2 after I had coded interview 3. I also compared the situations between the 2-research interviewees.

## Appendix 8: Memo 072 16 /4/2015 interview 14

### I can't make generalisations

Zaina feels that she cannot make generalisations on the learner's attitude towards learning; it depends on so many factors like motivation/mood/family-social background. Definitely she finds teaching the unemployed learner sometimes difficult because of the factors that she has mentioned. But insists that there are certain activities that the learners definitely like *they tend to find discussions and group work interesting and motivating. Assignments and homework are not always welcome*. This seems to fit in with what most trainers have experienced but also with Knowles' notion of self-directed learning where the adult learner enjoys solving-problem activities. But there is a positive side to teaching the adults and most participants mentioned *that they enjoy being able to discuss serious or up-to-date topics (depending on language knowledge)* this has been a repeated theme by almost all. See Beccare, Adriano, Bitu, Selena, Solea, Doris etc....suggesting, use their experience to teach and at the same time the trainer learns too from these life experience. (I need to build on this). There are satisfying moments also mentioned by all the trainers and a good example that has recurred eg Zaina *I always feel satisfied or successful when I see motivation, enthusiasm and the will to learn/when I get positive feedback from my students* similar remarks were expressed by Ceebie, Selena, Solea, Bitu, Beccare, Andarian, Doris. On the other hand, this can be strongly contrasted with the difficulties and challenges of teaching this type of learner.... Zaina points out she enjoys least...*problems with discipline, lack of motivation and goal in life..... Lack of interest and boredom* (Look at the other memos and build this)

## **Appendix 9: Types of labour market programmes**

The following are examples of programmes that exist:

- The second chance programme gives opportunity to those who did not complete upper secondary school and can therefore attend classes after work. Alternatively, there is the intensive apprenticeship programme that provides both on-the-job training and school based learning in Adult Centres (Volkshochschulen). But OECD (2003) in a study entitled: Thematic Review in Austria found that the dropout rate was high although there seems to be no accurate statistics to justify this claim.
- The second category is the upgrade training for the employed workers, which is offered by various vocational institutes of the Chamber of Commerce and training institutes of the Chamber of Labour.
- The labour market programmes focus on re-integrating unemployed people back into the job market but the details will be discussed in the thesis, as this is an area of interest for my study.
- Non-vocational education provides courses for self-development and hobby-like activities.
- (Fachhochschulen) are special colleges and universities, which were set up in 1994 to expand tertiary education with an occupational outlook, to link the employers and the students. At the same time, the universities too have recognised the need to include continuing education in order to improve professionalism, and also to keep up with new challenges and developments. But the number of adult students admitted is still small compared to traditional ones.



- The last category is the firm-based/in-company training that encourages the employers to develop their own training programmes (ALPINE, 2008).

## **Appendix 10: Telephone interview and original quotations**

This is an example of an interview that should have been a face-to-face but turned out to be a telephone interview with participant Sylvia (8). In the invitation letter and consent form, I had indicated the different options of doing the interviews: face-to-face, telephone, and e-mails. I had requested Sylvia personally for the interview, so we planned to hold it in her office because at that time she was doing individual coaching and job placement. She chose a day when she had enough time. So we fixed an appointment but her son fell sick and we postponed it to an indefinite date. I sent her a reminder after 5 weeks but she was still on sick leave. 8 weeks later, she was made redundant, and it was difficult to meet her as she explained that the company had requested for her to go on holiday. She had no alternative but to go on holiday. When she got back, she called me to have ‘on the spot’ telephone interview because she had suffered a guilty conscience. Due to my knee injury, I was still at home. I felt that we could do the interview because I had already given her the questions and consent form in advance to prepare. I quickly searched for my dictaphone, which I turned on. I then repeated the wording of the consent form and then commenced with the interview. Although, she speaks English fluently, she asked to be interviewed in her first language that is German. She had some surprising information concerning the management that I found useful.

### **Original language (German) for Sylvia's quotations used in this thesis**

Page 133

Ich würde kleine Organisationseinheiten machen und nicht zentralisiert, wie es ist. Klarheit ist wichtig. Ich würde eine zwischen Ebene Management erstellen. Was sonst, was sonst? Ich weiß es nicht. In unserem Standort Dinge waren in Ordnung. Ein Betriebsrat die Arbeiter zu unterstützen, wäre gut. Eine, die von der Verwaltung unabhängig ist. .... Ich möchte eine bessere Weiterbildungsmöglichkeiten haben. Wir haben nur ein paar Krümel, aber nicht wirklich etwas vernünftig. Neue Ausbildung und Produkte sind nur einige der Änderungen die Ich es mir gewünscht hätte.

Page 166

Ich würde nicht einen jungen Menschen in einer Gruppe setzen, wo die Menschen älter sind. Das ist schrill. Das passt nicht. Man braucht ein bestimmtes Alter oder. Aber der Vize Vers ist möglich. Sie können in einer Gruppe von jungen Lernenden eine ältere Person setzen. Natürlich würde ich Ausbildung, Erfahrung betrachten. Ich würde darauf achten, wie die Person ist. Ist es ein technisches Thema oder ein Soft-Skill Thema?